MARCH.

"THE CAPTURE OF DE WET."

(See page 555.)

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE
FOR BOYS & "OLD BOYS."

EDITED BY "THE OLD FAG." ATHLETIC EDITOR, C. B. FRY.

6ª

Vol. VI. No. 36. MARCH, 1902.

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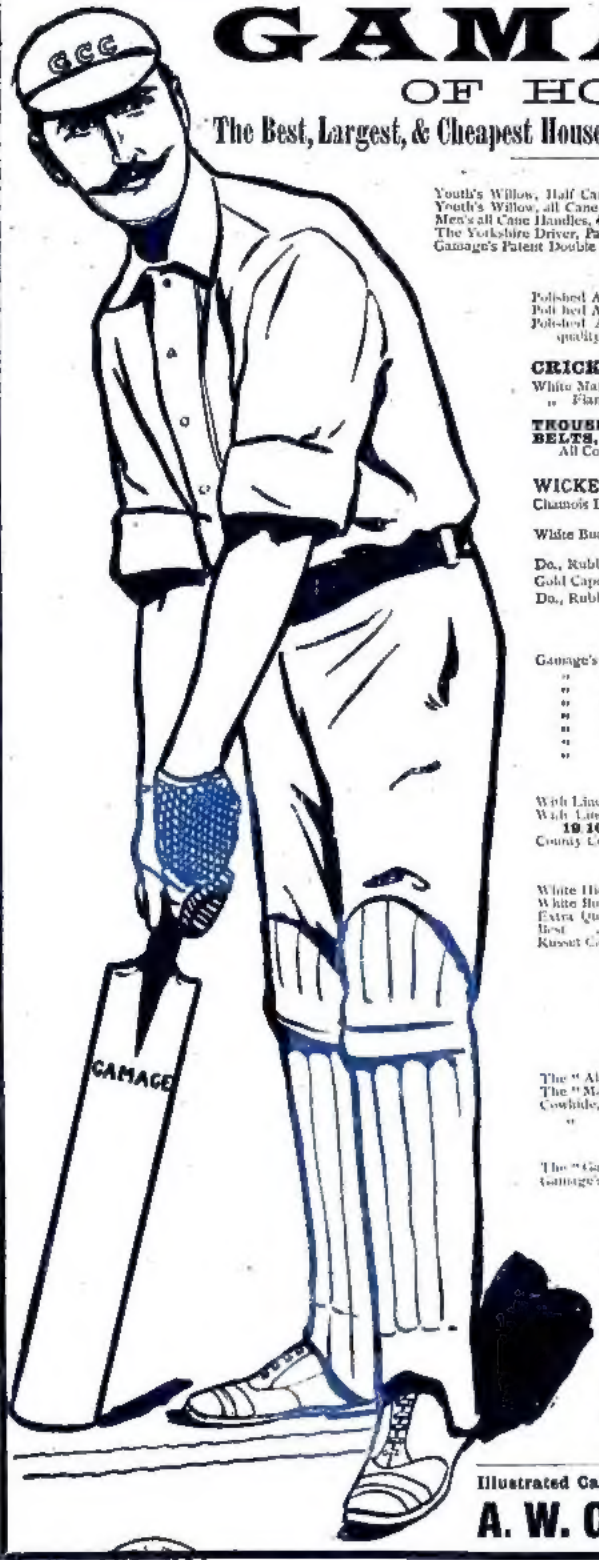

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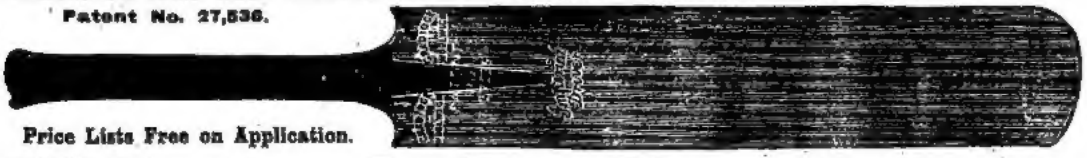

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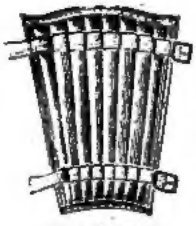

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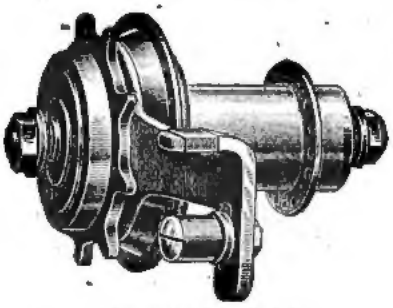

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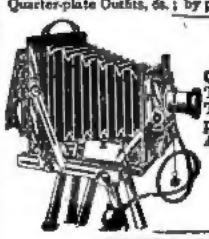

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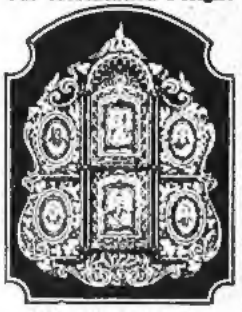

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THE CAPTAIN.

Contents for March, 1902.

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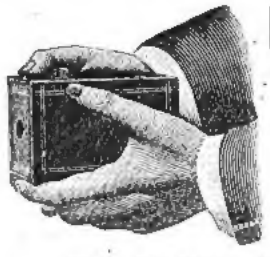

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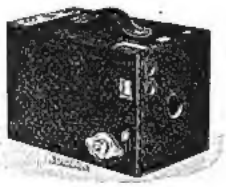

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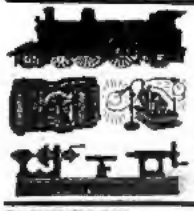

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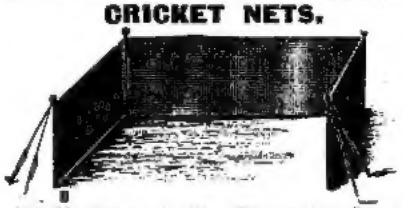

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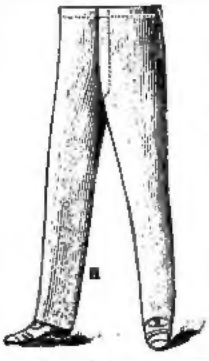

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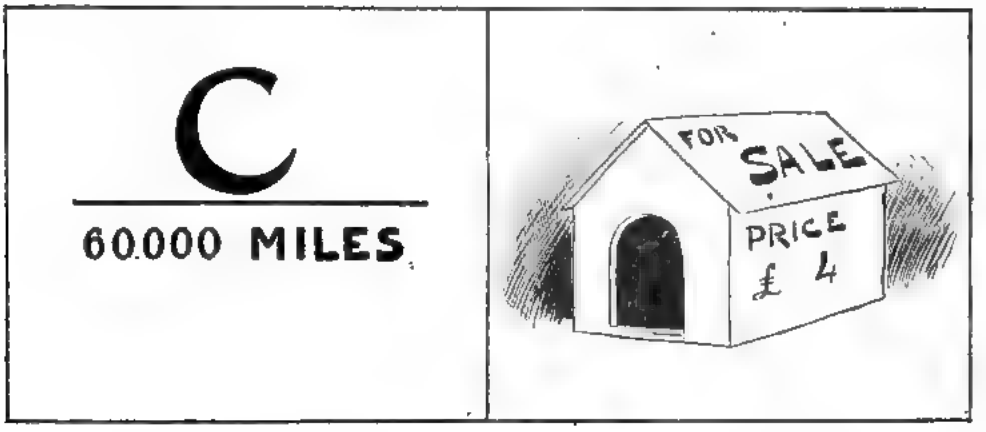

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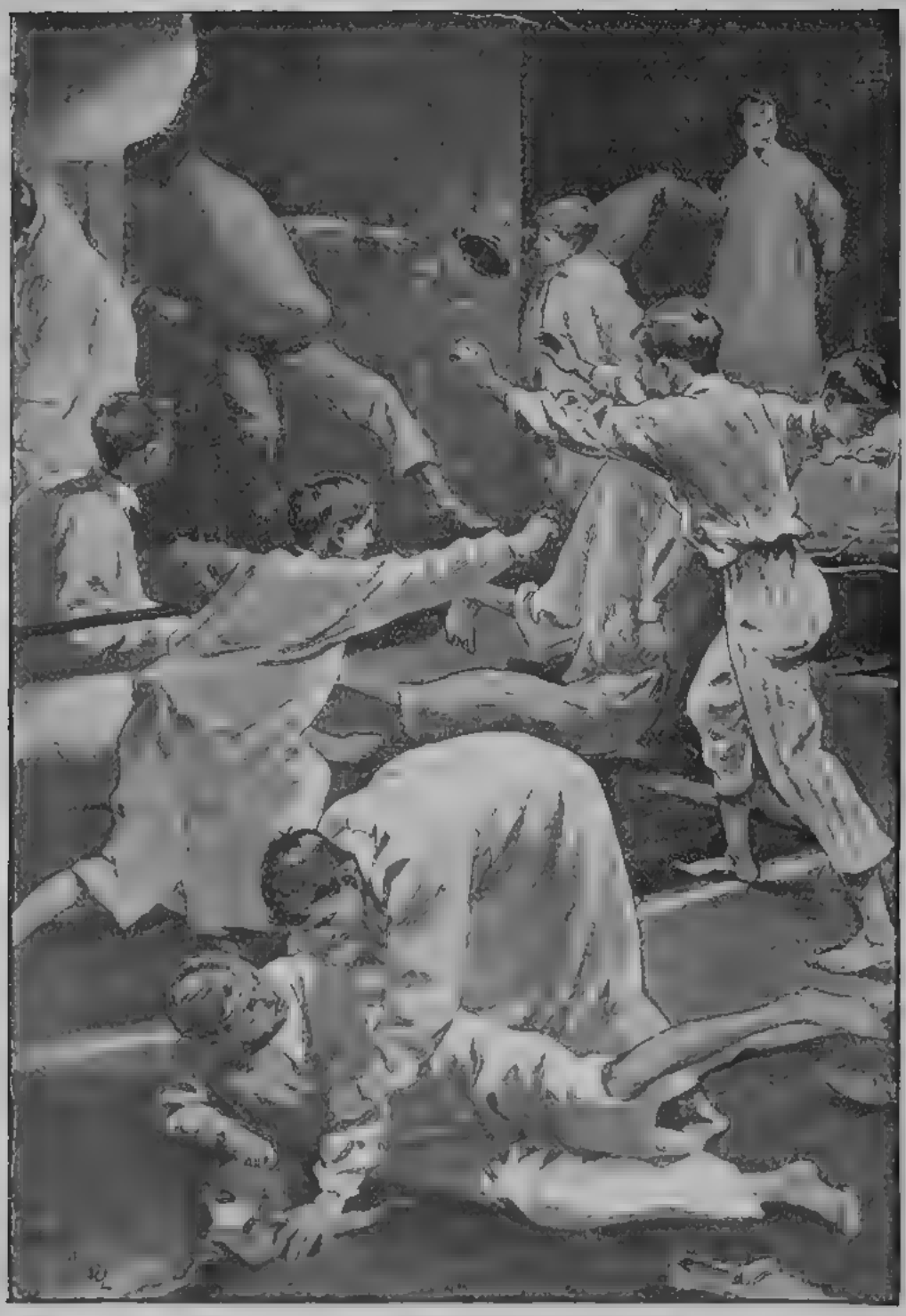

I FLUNG MY PILLOW WITH ALL MY STRENGTH AT THE APPROACHING FIGURE.

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TOLD ON THE JUNIOR SIDE

By H. Burrows.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

III.—THE JUNIOR CLASSIC.

"Is he going?" murmured Bannister, craning his neck in the vain endeavour to peer out of the window.

"Looks like it," responded Carter, who was two inches the taller; "I almost think——"

"Carter and Bannister do talk inside the class," interposed the French master; "one hundred lines apiece."

"Oh, Mossoo!"

"Another hundred lines! How for you like that, hein?"

And order was momentarily restored.

The cause of this excitement was the sight of the House Master, no longer in academical costume, conversing in the playground with the Senior Classic, and evidently giving him instructions. Could it be he was about to make one of his periodical visits to town? These almost invariably kept him too late to return the same night, and gave us twenty-four hours' unmitigated enjoyment. For it happened at the time of which I write, that, with the exception of the Junior Classic, who, though vigorous enough in his methods, was reputed to possess a sympathetic leaning towards "larks," there was no one of the ordinary masters who had much control over the boys. So when the House Master went to town!

"If I only *knew* he was going," muttered Carter, in an undertone.

And whilst the class simmered, young Lewis meditated. Lewis was a delicate-complexioned, flaxen-haired youngster, with a far-away look in his eyes, and a thoughtful, half-melancholy cast of countenance. Enthusiastic ladies generally refer to such a one as "the dear boy," whilst inexperienced masters are loth to rebuke him for seeming inattention, since he seems so rapt in lofty meditation. And meditating he frequently is: but not, as a rule, upon the subjects for which he obtains credit. So young Lewis meditated. And meditating, he reflected that one of Jalaguier's weak points was a tendency to lose his head when excited, and to follow the first suggestion made to him. And as he thought of this, young Lewis smiled his sweet, seraphic smile.

"I say, Carter," he whispered, persuasively. "wouldn't you like to get out and see if he is really going?"

"Why, of course I should, chuckle-head," responded Carter.

"Then look out," quoth Lewis. And lowering his head, he uttered an unearthly yell and rushed across the class, butting the unoffending Carter in the stomach.

Now Carter was one of the last boys to strike a little fellow without great provocation, but, enraged at this unmanly assault, he grasped Lewis with one hand, and with the other freely belaboured the part of his anatomy which came uppermost.

"Ah! the wild boys! I will you report!" cried Jalaguier, rushing to separate them.

"He hit me, sir," whimpered Lewis, with the tears streaming down his cheeks; "he hurt me, sir; and he is bigger than I am."

"Ah, poltron Anglais! Why for the little boy you smack? It is not the chivalrous!"

"I am afraid of him, sir," sobbed Lewis, plaintively.

"Ah, the cru-el boy, cru-el boy! How can you so, how can you so?"

"I know he will hit me again, sir. Turn him out, sir, turn him out."

"I will, I will," cried Jalaguier, frantically; and seizing the astonished Carter by the collar, he bundled him neck and crop out of the room; and, as the door closed upon him, Lewis put away his handkerchief and favoured the onlookers with a portentous wink. Then the mystified class began to see things.

And when the class was over, Carter came dancing in again with a smile which in itself proclaimed his tidings.

"It's all right," he cried; "I saw him start myself."

"Hurrah!" cried Bannister, flinging aside the book he was reading; "and how are we going to celebrate the occasion?"

Many schemes were proposed and rejected as either too risky or too tame.

"I have it," quoth I.

"Hold him," said Carter.

"Let's hear it, said Bannister.

"Suppose we keep quiet until bedtime, and then attack No. 4?"

A burst of applause broke from the assembly. We would.

No. 4 and No. 6 (where Carter, Bannister, and I slept) were the leading and the rival dormitories. We were divided by No. 5, a room, however, which bore the not undeserved reputation of being full of muffs and milksops (both abhorred of the Junior Classic), and, therefore, merely performed the useful, though frequently unhappy, function of a buffer state. A more formidable division was a landing, with a short flight of stairs leading down to it from No. 5, and then up again to No. 4. This gave the latter room a great advantage. Whilst we could not attack them without crossing it, it was of little defensive use to us unless we turned out No. 5 bodily and took our station there. Owing, as we devoutly believed, to this circumstance, the star of No. 4 had been for some little time in the ascendant, and we were consumed with a desire for revenge.

Explained by this sentiment, our conduct during the rest of the day was so exemplary as even to banish from the furrowed brow of the Senior Classic the worried look it always bore when left in charge. Bedtime came, lights were out, and the masters had withdrawn. Trustworthy scouts reported that the coast was clear and the enemy unprepared. We leapt from our beds and prepared for action.

"Steady there!" whispered Carter, excitedly. "Don't make a row, or those muffs in the next room will let them know we are coming."

Noiselessly we fell into line.

"All got slippers?" said I.

"Rather," was the response.

"Does anyone want another pair?" quoth a small, gentle voice, and young Lewis pointed triumphantly to a heap beside him.

"Where did you get those from?"

"I crawled under the beds of No. 5, and bagged the lot. No one saw me."

"Good kid!" quoth Carter, approvingly.

"But we can't carry two pair," objected I. "Suppose we leave them here in reserve in case we are driven back?"

"Let us take theirs, and keep our own in reserve," suggested Bannister.

The amendment met with unanimous approval.

"Now, come on," said Carter. "Here, you fathead, just take your pillow out of the case. Do you want to split it?"

The new fellow obeyed. Through No. 5 we crept, down the stairs to the landing. Then, with a loud yell, we rushed up the stairs; and as our opponents sprang awakened from their beds, a deftly aimed slipper saluted every one. The attack on No 4 had commenced.

And then ensued a most spirited contest. Led by a lanky Irish youth, by name McGuire, the enemy, although surprised, offered a strenuous resistance. Long and stubborn did the conflict rage. Wherever the enemy fled, or wavered in disorder, there McGuire rushed headlong to the rescue. Wherever spindle-shanked McGuire—doughty foe!—plied his bolster and yelled his shrill defiance, there our men went down like ninepins, and we retreated. At last it became evident that if No. 6 were to gain the victory, we must first dispose of this redoubtable antagonist. Unanimously Carter, Bannister, and I rushed upon the champion of No. 4. He reeled, he staggered, he fell—no, he was up again. Disdaining the attentions of the smaller fry, we stuck grimly to our task. Down we went, one after another, only to spring up again and press on the attack.

Suddenly McGuire slipped, strove vainly to recover himself, and rolled over on the ground. With a yell we closed to pin him to the floor. A sudden lull in the storm behind us indicated that some fresh danger was at hand. Up I sprang, only to note a tall form entering the room, candlestick in hand. Too excited to pause and reflect, I flung my pillow with all my strength at the approaching figure. The well-aimed missile produced its full effect. With the candlestick flying from his hand, the new-comer went head over heels down the stairs. A startled exclamation escaped his lips. Only too well we recognised that voice. Heavens! I had bowled over the Junior Classic!

Shall I dwell upon the frantic haste with which friend and foe alike made for the nearest beds? There was no getting back to No. 6; and we all sought refuge together. Talk about overcrowding! There were at least five youths in the couch into which I scrambled, not to mention those who had found shelter under it. Amidst a deathlike silence the Junior Classic

gathered himself together, re-lit the candle, and re-entered the room.

For once he seemed uncertain how to act. Possibly the unexpected assault had momentarily nonplussed him. Gazing round the room, his eyes alighted on the many slippers which carpeted the floor. With a grim smile that boded little good to the owners, he stooped and gathered up those that lay close around him.

"You shall answer to me for this to-morrow," said he, and departed, taking the slippers with him.

And on the morrow the Junior Classic assembled the house, and, arranging the captured slippers on the desk before him, surveyed them with grim satisfaction. I skip the opening part of his address, in which he denounced in scathing terms the appalling iniquity of a bolster-fight.

"I need not ask you who commenced the struggle," said he. "These slippers alone sufficiently identify the assailants. They were the boys of No. 5."

We of No. 6 looked at each other aghast.

"Here, we must put this right," muttered Carter.

"Yes, but wait a bit," said Bannister; "he doesn't look at all waxy."

And what was the Junior Classic saying?

"If it had been the boys of No. 6 I should have known how to deal with them"—an injured expression flitted over young Lewis's countenance—"but I confess it is the first time I have ever had to complain of No. 5. Now, I do not like to interfere between boys and boys, but I have seen for some time that you have been rather put upon, and I am inclined to forgive you for showing a little spirit. Indeed, now you have begun to find your feet, I do not mind telling you it was high time you did assert yourselves a little. But you must not overdo it, you know."

The house stood dumbfounded in its astonishment. But the Junior Classic turned smilingly to Walters, the captain of No. 5, and proceeded:—

"I will not ask if it was you who flung that missile at me, Walters——"

Walters, a mild-mannered, be-spectacled youth, with a taste for Wordsworth, almost swooned at the suggestion.

"As I have said, I am more pleased than anything at finding you and the others have more spirit than I thought. There, there, boy! There is nothing to be so melancholy about! I repeat, it will be all the better for you fellows and the school generally if you do learn a little more to take your own part. Only bear in mind"—severely—"I must have no more of this."

And the Junior Classic quitted the room, leaving the boys staring at each other agape.

Then Bannister and Carter and I, followed by young Lewis, arose and addressed the bewildered Walters.

"Really, Walters," said Carter, "I never knew you were such a bruiser. Knocking down the Junior Classic, too! You must give me some lessons in boxing, you know."

"We are safe enough from No. 4 now, aren't we?" inquired Bannister. "They will never get past champions like No. 5. We are proud of you, Walters."

"I don't know about that," interposed Lewis, in his most melancholy tones. "My mamma does not like me to be with rough boys, and I did think of asking leave to go into No. 5. But it would be of no use now."

"Upon my word, Walters——" commenced I; but Walters had fled.

FURTHER ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS BY C. B. FRY.

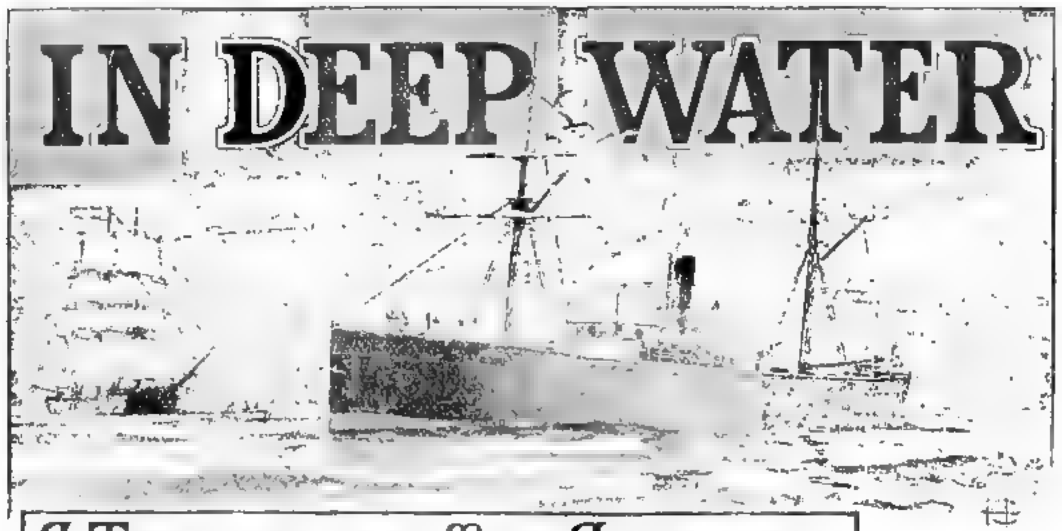
Chum.—Yes, on this occasion you mention I played the ball on to my pads when it cannoned off into the wicket. Foolish stroke, that. No, I do not bowl much now. I am rather tired of the fuss about doubtful deliveries. **A. L. Sutcliffe.**—The three best fast bowlers in England? Really, I don't know. Hirst, Wilson, Lockwood, and Bradley, I suppose, are the four most people would select. Then there is that mysterious Barnes, but I do not know whether he is fast or only medium. Opinions differ about bowlers. **Lionel.**—Best oil for bats is a mixture of raw linseed and ordinary salad. Wipe your bat over with an oily rag about once a fortnight in the winter. Bats often fail to drive at first owing to the cane handles being stiff and unpliable. **A. T.**—Swimming is not bad for football; but you cannot do much swimming when you are playing football, as the former exercise is rather exhausting. You can judge best for yourself from experiments how much swimming you can do without spoiling your football. **F. Dady.**—You cannot do better than go on with your dumb-bell work on C. E. Lord's excellent system, together with as much outdoor exercise in games as you can get. Indian clubs may be used as well as dumb-bells; but do not overdo artificial exercise of this sort. You cannot hurry muscular development; gradual, regular work is the thing. **F. G. Skinner.**—Going to get the *Evening News* to see whether I've beaten Abel? My word, that sounds rather old! Mr. G. O. Smith's address is "Ludgrove," New Barnet. Opinions differ as to who is the best all-round cricketer. Hirst, I think, would get most votes.

(*See page 510 for Mr. Fry's article on "How to Race."*)

THEY FELL DOWN INTO THE MUDDY WATERS OF THE SWIFT FLOWING RIVER.—*(See page 493.)*

Google

IN DEEP WATER



A Tale of the Mid-Atlantic.

By Stacey Blake and W. E. Hodgson.

Illustrated by George Hawley.

This story concerns the fate of the ss. *Creole* (belonging to the well known shipping firm of Grimm, Channing & Grimm) and of the *Creole's* second mate, Grant Heath. Hudson, captain of the *Creole*, undertakes to get rid of Grant Heath, against whom Martin Grimm, junior partner in the firm, bears a grudge, and afterwards scuttle the *Creole*, which is heavily insured, in return for a bribe of £3,000. While Martin Grimm and Hudson are discussing the scheme, their conversation is overheard by Edith Hopewell, niece of Mr Channing, the senior partner, who is lying at the point-of death in his house at Hampstead. Grant Heath goes aboard the *Creole* at Cardiff. Finding the ship in a great state of disorder, as the crew, having signed on, are spending their advance notes ashore, it is with difficulty that the two mates get any of the men to come and work. Captain Hudson, arriving just as the ship is ready, sees the new second mate and treats him roughly. Once the voyage has begun the crew find they are to be almost starved, and mutiny—but as they are calling at the Azores the captain gives them money, which they spend in drink, and the voyage proceeding, the crew neglect the ship, and Grant Heath, when taking in awning poles, is knocked overboard by Captain Hudson. From this time all on board drink heavily, and navigation is neglected—the crew lying about the decks in a fuddled condition—when a barque, the *Stella*, heaves in sight flying signals of distress. Getting no answer from the steamer, the captain and one of his men come aboard the *Creole*, and finding the whole crew in an unconscious state, the captain of the barque transfers the crews, he and his men taking the names of the *Creole* people which he finds on the ship's papers), and leaving the *Creole's* crew to shift as best they can on the leaky sailing-vessel, when they recover their senses. When Captain Hudson finds himself on a strange ship he attempts to shoot Talbot, his first mate, but is himself severely wounded in the struggle that ensues. Grant Heath, rescued from a watery death by fishermen, is conveyed to Fayal, where he meets Edith Hopewell. They leave Fayal on the *Adrian*, and in the course of their voyage encounter the *Stella*, with the *Creole's* crew aboard her. Grant, disguised by his newly grown beard, volunteers to go as mate on the *Stella*, which wants an officer. Some days later, putting into the Cays for repairs, the *Stella* finds the *Creole* anchored in a little bay. The *Creole's* real crew, after a desperate fight in which several lives are lost and many severe wounds sustained, succeed in retaking the steamer, Howell and his men being forced to return to their frail sailing-vessel. After the fight, Hudson comes upon Grant Heath lying wounded and unconscious on the *Creole's* deck. Supposing himself to be unobserved, he throws Heath overboard.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INSTEAD OF JIM GOSSER.

WITH deadened senses, incapable of any sustained thought, save the primitive, instinctive one that made him continue to move his arms and legs, Grant Heath was borne away by the resistless ocean current. He heard, as though afar off in another world, the murmur of dashing surf; he was aware of the stars sprinkled over the indigo sky blinking at him coldly, and he saw the big, round moon disappear in a bank of clouds; but all this, even the rise and fall of the water, he saw, and felt, and heard, without really being wholly conscious of it. For his mind seemed dulled, as though lulled by a narcotic.

He became vaguely aware, as he slid up and down the smooth, watery hills, that a black object of considerable size lay there slowly swaying to the swell, but he lost immediate interest in it, because he began to watch the bright disc of moon play hide-and-seek among the cloudlets. He was only conscious in a dim sort of way that strong arms

took hold of him presently, but how, or why, of any reason or sequence, he had no power to think. Nor was he interested.

He was only very tired.

When he came to consciousness he opened his eyes upon surroundings familiar enough. He was in a ship's cabin, lying in the top bunk. Daylight was streaming through the port-hole, and he saw the reflected sheen of the passing water rippling over the white-painted panels. His own clothes hung on a peg, swinging slowly from side to side with the regular sway of the vessel. There was a gurgling and washing sound, evidencing that the ship moved through the water.

"And I am aboard the barque after all!" he murmured to himself. "I must have dreamt it all, then. And the ship is moving. I thought we were lying-to under an island for repairs. What time is it, I wonder?"

He saw his waistcoat, wherein his watch usually reposed, hanging at the foot of the bunk, and he made a move to reach it, but, to his surprise, fell back without strength on to his pillow again.

He lifted up his head. It felt like lead. He could not understand.

"I must have been ill!" he muttered. "I am as weak as a cat. It is incomprehensible. Confound it! why doesn't someone come?"

Apparently his complainings were heard, for the cabin door opened, and a man with a fat face and rotund body appeared.

"Hulloa! Who are you?" asked Grant, noting that this man was a stranger. "I haven't seen you before."

"I reckon you ain't quite strange to me," answered the fellow, laconically. "I'm steward of thishyer craft, and glad to see yer with yer eyes open at last."

"Great Scott! Steward, are you? Then what ship is this?"

"The barque *Stella*, bound for New Orleans. I reckon you called her the *Foam*, of Hull," added the man, with a queer little grin.

"Ha! Then we didn't capture the *Creole*?"

"Waal, I should say your crew did. Yew seem to have bin chucked to the sharks. Anyhow, when we got on board thishyer craft again, we picked you up swimming like a porpoise. Then yew went a bit soft in the nut, I guess."

"And that happened?"

"Four days ago."

"Then I have not dreamed it. And have I not seen your face before?"

"I should say so. Didn't you gargle one of my cocktails aboard the *Creole*, when you came to try a bit of bluff with Captain Howell?"

"Howell is his name, is it? The man who claimed to be Samuel Hudson?"

The steward grinned with the air of a man who remembered a prime joke. Suddenly his face straightened.

"Hyer's the cap'n," he said.

There was a footfall outside, the door opened again, and the long face of Captain Jasper Howell filled the space between door-edge and frame.

"So you've waked up, sonny, have you?" he said with a drawl. "You've had a purty considerable rest."

"Have I been unconscious four days?" asked Grant bewildered.

"Nearly so, I guess. You'll feel empty now, I s'pose. Peter, jest hustle in some hot stuff."

The stout steward presently reappeared with a pannikin of thick soup, with which he proceeded to feed Grant, while Howell sat upon a locker gravely sucking at a black cigar. It was one of a few he had inadvertently left in a locker when he had vacated the barque in favour of the *Creole*, which same cigars he was overjoyed to find had been overlooked by the steamer's crew when they had been aboard.

"So, you see, you are back on this leaky old craft again," he said, when Grant had finished the last spoonful.

"And so are you," returned Grant, with some amount of misgiving in his mind, for he could not forget that this man had every reason to be hostile to him—that possibly his only motive in saving him might be a revengeful one. But Howell answered unaggressively enough.

"Yes, and your old crew have galloped off with the steamer. How did you come ter be chucked overboard?"

Grant shook his head. His memory was hazy on the matter. He remembered the fight clearly enough, but that was all.

"Someone must have unshipped you, calc'lating you were dead."

"That must have been so," murmured Grant. "And this ship—you call her the *Stella*, eh?"

"So, not the *Foam*, of Hull," answered Howell, dryly.

"And is she taking in water like she was?"

"Very near as bad. We patched her up a trifle at the island, but she is past repairing. It's hands ter the pumps every other watch."

There was a little pause, during which the Yankee skipper sucked his cigar contemplatively, and Grant watched the ever rippling light dancing across the panelling.

"We had a bit of talk in the saloon of the *Creole*, didn't we?" said Grant, musingly.

"When we each tried to do what we could in the lying business," added Howell.

"I don't know. I think what I told you was mostly truth," returned Grant. "Anyhow, we

both know more than we did then. Would you mind telling me how you got hold of the *Creole?*"

The skipper blew out a prodigious stream of smoke. "I reckon," he said laconically, "we wuz jest dead beat when we came across her, what with short rations and bad weather. We signalled distress and received no reply; went aboard her and found every durned skunk so fuddled that there wuzn't a live sensible man on the ship. We jest swapped ships, that was all. There's one thing I ain't tumbled to—how did you git aboard?"

"The *Stella*, in distress, signalled help from a steamer that crossed her course, bound for Jamaica from Liverpool, *vid* the Azores. I was on board that steamer, having embarked at Fayal. The barque wanted stores and the loan of a few hands. I came aboard with three men to give the help they required. You kept the engineers, by the way?"

"Yes, to work the machinery."

"And now what?"

Howell shrugged his shoulders with the air of a man who had lost interest in the matter under discussion. "It's as we were," he said. "The *Creole's* gone on with half-a-day's start; she'll be in New Orleans some days afore us, if that mad Scotsman ken keep the engines right going, and we are making the same course, p'raps going hairf as fast."

"Yes," echoed Grant, "it's as we were, except that there are some dead men to account for—and I am here."

"Yes, yes, you are here," repeated Howell, with a keen, cunning look in his face, "and you'll be reported dead aboard your own ship—tumbled overboard off the Azores. So, ez a matter of fact, Grant Heath, second mate, don't exist."

"I appear to be still alive."

"Yes," agreed Howell, with a drawl, "you air still alive; only I guess it will have occurred to you that I kant look with such a thundering lot of favour upon you. I reckon you had more ter do with the upsetting of my schemes than anyone."

"So that, finding me here in your power, sick and helpless," retorted Grant, bitterly, "you will take your revenge?"

"I dunno as I said anything about revenge," said Howell, after a little pause, "though I reckon I mought do anything I liked with you. But I ain't quite that sort. I'm onter any man in a fair fight, but I ain't a mean, murderin' ruffian, and I reckon you are a white man all through. I saw your cabin aboard the *Creole*. But I reckon I've got ter make use of you, anyhow. I've lost four men killed in that little picnic, and one on 'em Mr. Gosser, the second mate. If I go inter New Orleans with three men and an officer lost there'll be questions asked. If I ken get another officer it won't be so bad. You air lost aboard the *Creole*, anyhow. I reckon I want you to jest step inter Jim Gosser's shoes."

"Become, in a word, your second mate?"

"So, and tew take his name till we git to port. As it is, we've got a few thoughts to think out, considering there's no blamed papers aboard this ship. I removed 'em all when I went on the steamer, and they're there now."

"Is that all you want of me?" asked Grant.

The ship-master nodded. "I reckon," he said, "that 'ull fix up what I want. I ain't p'ticular anxious f'r anything jest now 'cept a quiet life."

"Yes, I'll agree to that," answered Grant, after a moment's reflection.

So it came about that Jim Gosser, who lay fathoms deep among the Atlantic sand and shells, was revived in the person of Grant Heath.

At the end of the tenth day, when the *Stella* made the mouth of the Mississippi, Grant had so far recovered that he was able to take a turn on the poop. When, at Fort Jackson, the Customs officers came aboard and discovered a ship *minus* papers and log-book, he had a further opportunity of judging Captain Howell's genius for bluffing. The story told was something to the effect that one of his crew had gone mad, and, breaking into his room, had seized all papers, log-book, and a number of other valuable objects, and had jumped overboard with them in mid-ocean.

"'E's the finest, biggest, fattest liar on the hull Atlantic seaboard," murmured Mr. Skinner, aside to Grant. "Scat me, 'e does it as easy as smoking!"

"You don't do badly yourself, Mr. Skinner," replied Grant.

"H'm! I dunno," answered the mate, sadly. "I didn't spoof yew much, did I?"

"No," murmured Grant, sententiously; "you see, I started with most of the advantage."

CHAPTER XIX.

TO SPANISH TOWN.

MARTIN GRIMM had sowed. Now it was his harvest time. The first element of mischance that arose to disquieten him came about from the obscure reason that a landlord who owned a tenement in Greenwich objected, like his kind, to wait for an overdue rent.

When that faded woman, the wife of Samuel Hudson, shipmaster, came into possession of the worthless cheque which bore the signature of Martin Grimm, and found on attempting to cash

it that it was returned to her, dishonoured, she put it quietly on one side pending the return of her lord.

She was not one to bargain, and clamour, and question. Her years of solitary, shabby insignificance—for a sailor's wife is nearly always solitary, and often poor — had wrought no impatience in her, only humility. But when necessity began to tighten its hand upon her; when credit at the baker's and butcher's, and the little huckster's shop round the corner, ceased; when there came a curt communication from the landlord referring to rent overdue, she took out the slip of paper, with its opulent figures and impressive red stamp, purposing to show it to the man whose name was written at the bottom.

She would ask why it was dishonoured, why those figures written over his own signature were meaningless.

She rehearsed all she would say, how she would hand the paper to him. She chose carefully from among her meagre wardrobe what would be best and most suitable to wear, for she realised that it was no small thing for a skipper's wife to interview her husband's owner. Then a little gleam of inspiration bade her place the cheque in its box, and go without it.

When she got there, and was ushered into the sanctum of Martin Grimm, she promptly forgot all she had designed to say.

"I am the wife of Captain Hudson," she said, simply, "and I am starving."

Martin Grimm tapped his pen impatiently on his desk. He did not ask her to sit down. He glanced at her with an irritable frown creasing his forehead.

"I am sorry to hear that, Mrs Hudson, of course," he replied, "only I don't quite see what I have to do with it. I do not run a charitable institution. Your husband should have made provision——"

"He did make provision," she answered, quietly. "He sent me a cheque for £1,500, drawn by yourself. It was dishonoured."

Martin Grimm looked up in astonishment, and there was something else in his eyes. The pen tapped sharply and quickly. It might have been keeping time to his beating heart. He saw a vague, shadowy menace in the coming of this quiet, shabby woman.

"You must be mistaken, Mrs. Hudson," he said, in quiet reproval. "I have never paid your husband £1,500."

"No, no; I did not say that," she retorted. "You paid him the cheque for that, and then, when he had gone, you stopped its payment at the bank."

"I do not understand you," said Martin Grimm. He played a cautious tattoo on the desk. "You must be mistaken; I have given your husband no cheque. Let me see it!"

"I did not bring it."

His face fell. This was a woman behind whose subdued shabbiness lay a certain faculty of judgment.

"If, as you say, you hold a cheque with my name upon it, there is something wrong. It is certainly a forgery. Your husband has deceived you."

She pressed her lips together slightly. "My husband never deceives me," she said, with quiet emphasis. And this was true, for Samuel Hudson, in the hard, unscrupulous life he had led, at least had kept his vows to this faded woman who bore his name—whom he had sworn to love, honour, and cherish.

"It is right for you to trust your husband, of course," he answered, with a little sneer; "yet perhaps he is not all you believe him to be."

She turned to go. "Perhaps you are not all he believes *you* to be," she answered, dropping her voice.

"My good woman!"

"Have you not deceived him?"

"No; I know nothing about this cheque!"

"Yet it was refused payment at the bank by your express orders."

A hard light came into Martin Grimm's eyes. "Yes, Mrs. Hudson," he said, speaking very slowly; "I *did* sign that cheque, but I did not fill in the figures. In its open condition it was stolen from my desk, and the figures and the rest were inserted by the man who stole it for the purpose of defrauding me. Your husband was here the day that cheque was missed. For my own safety I gave instructions that no money was to be paid out of my account. In coming here, Mrs. Hudson, you have given me information that the cleverest detective in London was unable to supply. You have shown me that my most trusted skipper is, after all, only a common thief!"

Her face remained passive. There was no sign of emotion on the pale features. "I might remind you," she rejoined, "that I have made no secret of my own identity. The cheque was refused payment at the bank. I voluntarily gave my name and address. Besides, at first you pleaded ignorance even of the existence of such a cheque."

Grimm bared his teeth slightly. He knew he had fenced badly. He had committed the common mistake of underrating the strength of his antagonist.

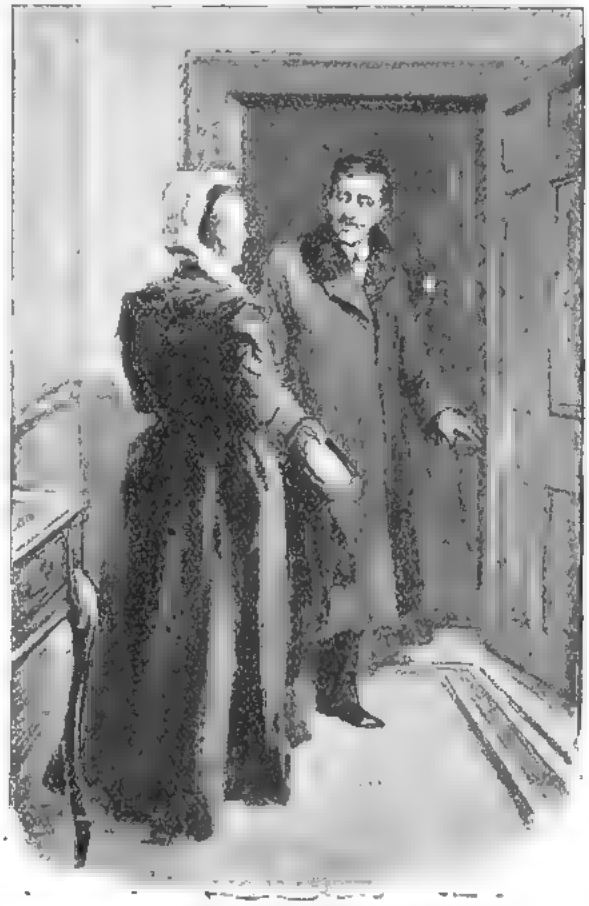
"I was trying to conceal your husband's shame from you," he replied with a snarl; "but now——"

She smiled a little bitter smile.

"I shall post it to my husband at New Orleans," she said. And the door banged behind her. This quiet, shabby woman had shot home.

"Confound it!" muttered Grimm, "the woman is annoying." But he had little opportunity of considering any probable sequence of this matter, for another momentous circumstance following quickly claimed all his thoughts.

It came about that night that the spirit moved Martin Grimm to pay a visit to his senior partner's house in Hampstead. Since John Channing's illness, the younger man's whole inquiries as to the other's progress had been conducted by means of the telephone. He had regularly rung up each morning to Hampstead, and asked the unvarying question as to how Mr. Channing had passed the night, and, upon learning, had replied suitably in terms of condolence or satisfaction as the case might be. He had made no personal visit, for reasons best known to himself. It came about, therefore, that he had little or no knowledge of many things that were fated to affect his destiny.



"GONE TO NEW YORK?" EXCLAIMED GRIMM, IN [illegible].

He had taken no account of the fact that since that stormy interview with Edith Hopewell, when she had so unexpectedly checkmated him, he had not seen nor heard of her. He supposed she was attending the sick man. Himself, it was reasonable to assume, she would seek to avoid. For his own part, he had plenty of reason to desire no encounter. He therefore deemed it best to temporarily ignore the existence of John Channing's ward. He wanted her silence now. Afterwards, when his schemes had blossomed into fruition, when, since she had kept silent so long, her knowledge would be valueless, he would be able to consider the subject of Edith Hopewell as the future Mrs. Martin Grimm with renewed interest. For, he argued, by suppressing the information she held, in the event of his being called to account she would be necessarily compromised as an accessory before the fact. And, would she voluntarily sacrifice herself?

In any case, what would this one girl's word be against his own, and against the evidence of the skipper and crew of the *Creole*? Who could call into question Hudson's conduct? Who could say he voluntarily and intentionally wrecked the *Creole*?

Arrived at the senior partner's house, he rang the bell. The door was opened by the housekeeper.

"Ha, Mrs. Simmons!" he said, in his blandest tones. "You see the cares of business have at last permitted me to come to present my inquiries in person. I understood you to say on the telephone yesterday that Mr. Channing's convalescence was quickly progressing towards perfect recovery."

"Yes," answered the housekeeper, regarding him a little doubtfully; "Mr. Channing has made a wonderful recovery. Won't you come in, sir?"

"Ha, yes! I suppose he won't have gone to bed yet?"

Mrs. Simmons knitted her brows with a little uncertainty. "I'm afraid you misunderstand, sir," she said. "Mr. Channing is not here."

"Not here?" he echoed.

"He went to Liverpool this morning to board the *Scotia*, which sailed for New York this afternoon."

"Gone to New York?" exclaimed Grimm in amazement. "What madness is this? Was he fit to go?"

"He might have been better," answered the woman, watching him narrowly, "but he was quite determined. He is going to Spanish Town, Jamaica, to meet Miss Hopewell."

"Miss Hopewell?" he gasped. "Is she not at home, then? I do not understand. Where are they going to?"

"To New Orleans."

"To New Orleans?" he whispered, hoarsely, with ashen lips. The cigarette between his fingers slipped suddenly to the floor. A sudden emotion seemed to shake him.

"I do not understand," he said, with a calmness that must have cost him much. "When did Miss Hopewell go?"

"She followed the *Creole* to the Azores."

Martin Grimm picked up his cigarette and looked at it with eyes that had fear written in them. He bit the end, and then mechanically wiped the tobacco from his mouth. In that moment of emotion he seemed to live whole lives. He hesitated weakly. He did not know what to ask next, lest the fresh knowledge that would come to him should be worse than the first. He did not know what his next word would lead to. He nerved himself.

"Did she go from the Azores to Jamaica?" he asked, not daring to meet the woman's eyes.

The other nodded.

"She cabled from Spanish Town to Mr. Channing. He started off by the next boat."

Martin Grimm's whitened lips were tremulous. Dark shadows crept under his eyes. He turned to the door and descended the steps, forgetting, in his agitation, the common courtesy of "Good-night."

"To New Orleans!" he murmured, huskily. "To New Orleans!"

That night, Martin Grimm went to Bristol, and the following morning he took passage aboard a 4,000-ton steamer that was going direct to Spanish Town, Jamaica.

CHAPTER XX.

MCPHERSON ADVISES.

MR. McPHERSON, rather more oily and black than usual, with a grimy slip of sticking-plaster stuck diagonally across his forehead, ascended the engine-room stairs and wandered out on deck.

He sucked thoughtfully at an empty pipe. Lines of care were on his face. His mouth was set grimly. He let his eyes sweep round the horizon. In the north and north-west were indications of flat land, and here and there streaks that would become low, wooded swamp land. On the port bow a schooner was leisurely making riverwards with the flowing tide, and right ahead a low-sterned tramp made a frothy wake for the *Creole* to follow.

"Sae, yon'll be the mouths of the Meesissippi," he murmured to himself. "Losh! it was a peety that feckless gomerill o' a propeller didna last till we'd got intae this smooth water!"

For Mr. McPherson had performed the feat of shipping a new propeller at sea.

They had rounded the north-west Providence Channel all right, and got well beyond Key West and the Marques Islands, where repairs might have been made with facility; when the propeller stripped. For three days and three nights he had worked with derricks and winches. He had built a derrick over the stern; he had directed how the cargo must be moved to heave the stern out of the water—in short, he had performed miracles.

After he had communed with himself at still further length upon the cussedness of engines and ships, and men and circumstances generally, he moved forward to join a little knot of men who stood by the galley door. One's hand was bound in rag, another bore an arm in a sling. Some had bandaged hands, others' faces were hidden by sticking-plaster. Not one man was whole; not a man but bore marks upon him of the recent combat.

"Ye're a pretty-looking lot," commented the chief engineer. "Ma certie, but ye remind me o' the dee when the Dhoontrochty team played footba' wi' a select team fra Glasga'. They cudna play footba' sae well as the veesitors; but losh! they could fecht bonny."

"How's Mr. Talbot gettin' on to-day?" asked one of the hands.

"I went tae hae a look at him a bit sin," replied Mr. McPherson, gloomily, "and he's no sae guid. It's been a vera sad voyage, and a lesson for a' of ye. A wee drap whusky is a' recht tae keep aboard in case o' eendisposition, sic as I suffer fra mesel' sometimes; but it's vera bad tae see ye drinking it doon as a beverage. I mind when I was a wee bit bairn at Dhoontrochty——"

But the chief engineer's reminiscent mood was cut short by a hand being laid on his shoulder. He turned round and saw Pipp. The steward was very white-faced. His mouth was trembling with a vague kind of fear. He was firmly of the opinion, which no argument to the contrary could shake, that they would all be placed under arrest when they reached the shore.

"The cap'n wants ter speak to yer, Mister McPherson," murmured Pipp. "E's hin the chart-room."

"Losh, mon! but ye look green aboot the gills."

"Me bones is dried up, sir, and there's blood on me 'ands," muttered the steward as he turned and shuffled aft.

"Someone's been yarning tae the loon," said McPherson, taking the empty pipe from his mouth gravely, as some of the men burst into low laughter. "Onyhoo, I dinna think ony o' us hae got sic a bonny future immediately aheid. There's got tae be a few things tae accoont for when we get intae port."

He found Captain Hudson deep in the study of the log-book. Since Talbot had been incapacitated, the chief engineer, as the only other officer aboard, even though not a navigating officer, had come to be frequently consulted by the skipper.

"Hae ye no made oot a guid yarn?" he asked. "We've got tae give reason for a few things. There's a' these wounded men and twa deid, not coonting Meester Heath."

"It's a thousand ter one as poor Heath's a goner," muttered Hudson. "He must have been tumbled overboard by one o' them Yanks when he was wounded. Nobody seems ter know much what happened."

"It'll no be guid policy to let on aboot this fecht at a'," replied the engineer slowly, tapping his empty pipe on his greasy palm. "Puir Heath was drooned a few hours oot o' Fayal, according to that log-book. If we say he got kilt in the fecht, the question'll come up as to where he came fra, then we'll hae tae make a clean breast o' the whole affair, hoo he drappet o'erboard, cos we were a' too daffy to help him, hoo we lost the ship—at least, you did—hoo Heath picked ye up on a rotten old barque, and a' the rest o' it. It'll no be guid tae tell the Board o' Trade. Ma certie, we'll a' get jugged, and we'll never get anither ship! Nae, as it is noo, the puir laddie had better remain drooned, and for the rest, we'll hae tae spin a yarn aboot being attacked by a strange craft wi' piratical intentions during the time we were laid up repairing the heaps o' scrap-iron they wrangly label engines aboard this craft."

"It's just what I'm thinking," said Hudson, with a gleam in his eyes. "Heath had better be left out of this fight altogether. Why say he was in it? The yarn is that we succeeded in beatin' off this lot who attacked us, with a loss of two men killed."

"And maistly everybody wounded," added McPherson, little knowing that his suggestion had given Samuel Hudson the very idea he sought to cloak the treacherous crime he had committed that night when they had regained the *Creole*.

"Ye'll mak' the log-book up according, mon?"

"Yes, I think it'll be a safe yarn. There ain't nobody as can contradict it, except that Yankee crew, and they'll keep quiet for the sake of their own skins. And," he added, in his own thoughts, "that swab of a second is dead."

"I'll just gang doon and hae a look at Meester Talbot," said McPherson, rising. "Do ye happen tae hae a wee bittie smoke, skeeper?"

"There ain't a shred of bacca on the ship."

"Ha weel, ha weel, it's a vera sad voyage," murmured McPherson, putting his empty pipe into his mouth as he sorrowfully departed.

He returned shortly. "He's asleep noo," said the engineer, "but according tae Pipp, he's pretty daffy. The sockdologer he got on the heid seems to hae upset his memory a bittie. I s'pose I'd better gang oot and instruct the men aboot the little yarn they've got tae remember?"

"Aye, and by thunder!" exclaimed Hudson, with sudden fierceness, "let 'em know that if one on 'em forgets anything it'll land us inside walls thicker than we can get through."

"I've nae doot I can impress it on their minds," returned the chief engineer. "Now, I mind when I was a wee bit bairn——"

"Mr. McPherson," snapped Hudson, offensively, "if it's that blessed Dhoontrochty you're goin' ter jaw about, just hustle."

"Losh, mon, dinna be sair-tempered!" murmured the Scot. "We hae got a muckle deeficulty, but we'll get oot o' it. It's vera sad, but it canna be helpit." Presently the pilot came aboard and joined the bo'sun on the bridge. He was a tall, thin man, of few words, with a melancholy eye.

"Ben a free fight aboard?" he asked, surveying the bo'sun's bandaged head and plastered face, and then glancing towards the man at the wheel, whose face was stuck up similarly. McPherson, coming upon the bridge, purposing to survey the nearing chains of lakes which form the mouths of the great Mississippi, overheard the question.

"Ma certie, mon," he said; "it's not been a fecht, but a battle royal. Some piratical loons tried to board us when we were leeing by under a cay repairin', and it was the bonniest fecht ye ever heard of. Ye dinna happen to hae a bittie plug on ye?" The pilot, interested, put his forefinger in his waistcoat pocket and produced a hunk of black tobacco. The engineer took it and began to slice it in his grimy palm, awhile he proceeded to give a full account of the *Creole's* adventures generally. By the time the steamer had reached Fort Jackson the pilot had heard the same story, varying in wealth of detail and personal incident, from half a dozen men.

When the Customs officers came aboard there, to put tapes and sealing-wax across the hatches and to overhaul the papers, they of the *Creole*, from the skipper to the cook, had rehearsed the

story enough to be able to give a most verisimilar account of their doings, with the result that before the steamer was well on her way to do the last hundred miles to New Orleans, several enterprising newspapers of that city were printing varied and wonderful accounts of the adventurous voyage of the *Creole*.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DAY OF RECKONING.

THE FIRST chapter of this story began with an old man and a girl at breakfast, and for the opening of this, the last chapter, Fate, who has written more stories than have ever been read, has set such another scene.

Moreover, they are the same individuals, and, as always, old John Channing is letting his coffee grow cold while he reads the shipping news.

They sat in a room of an hotel overlooking the Mississippi, at New Orleans. The murmur from the levée came in at the open window. The old man rustled his paper uneasily as he ran his eye down the list of arrivals. He read slowly, for his eyes were dimmer than of yore.

"Are you sure that the barque was called the *Foam*, of Hull?" he asked, looking over the edge of the paper.

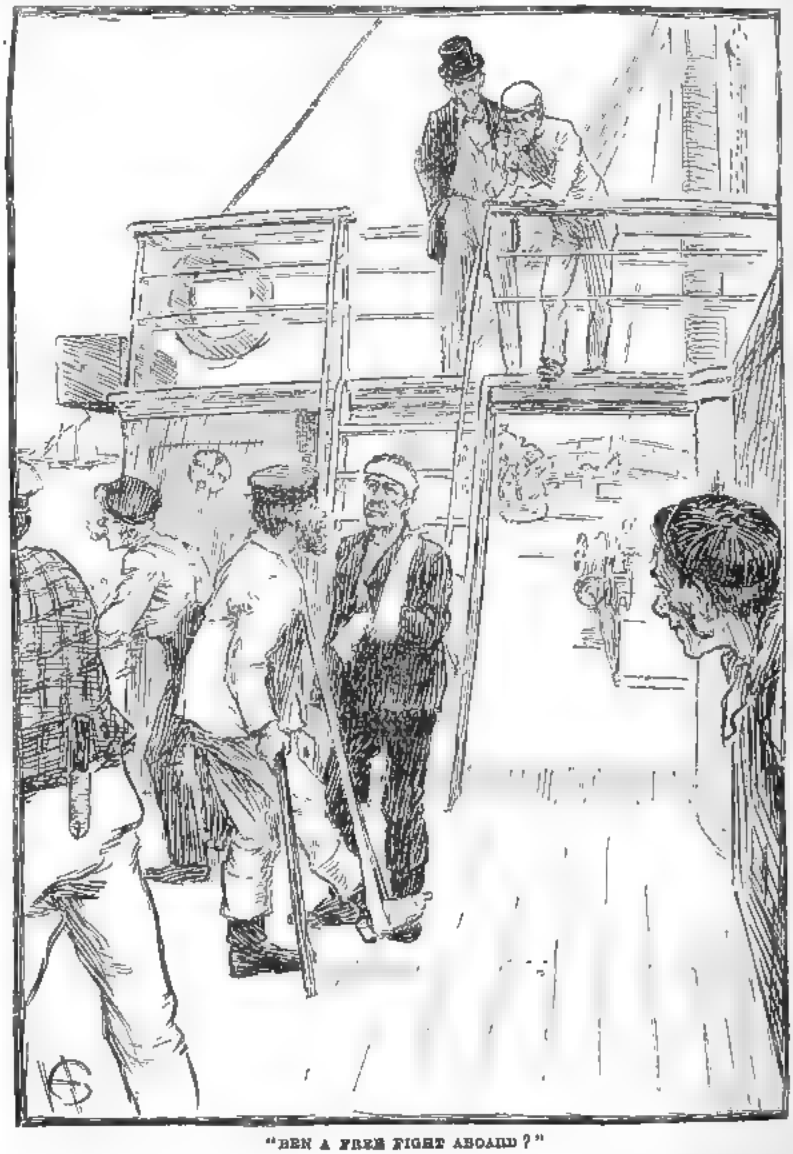
"Of course I am sure," answered Edith Hopewell. "Besides, that was the name entered in the log of the *Adrian*."

"Humph! She doesn't seem to have come in yet, anyhow. There's a barque with general cargo from Barcelona, called the *Stella*, but no *Foam* on the list."

His finger passed from the list of sailing vessels to the column of steam-arrivals. Near the bottom of the list he saw a name that seemed to set his eyes afire.

"The *Creole!*" he gasped, in an excited voice; "the *Creole!* Good gracious! Look, Edith, she is among the list of arrivals! What does it mean? The *Creole* in port! She is not scuttled, then!"

"The *Creole* here in the Mississippi?" echoed Edith, starting to her feet. "No, it cannot be; it must be another ship of the same name." She ran her eyes down the list, and saw the name staring her in the face. "I cannot understand!" she exclaimed with amazement in her voice. "The *Creole's* crew were all aboard this barque. The *Creole* must be in other hands. And where



"BEEN A FREE FIGHT ABOARD?"

can this barque be—and Grant Heath?" she added.

The old man shook his head. It was all a hopeless, unfathomable mystery to him.

"At least we will go and see," he said tremulously.

With anxious haste they walked along the levée. They had no idea where the ship they sought might lay. Amid the litter of the quay, the sheds, moving trucks, great ramparts of cotton bales, and mountains of general merchandise they made their way. They reached the water's edge, and after much searching came full opposite a steamer, where one, a red-haired, greasy man, standing by the engine-room door, was criticising, freely and offensively, in a strong Scottish accent, the unworkmanlike way in which a certain shore-derrick was being manœuvred.

"Here we are!" gasped the shipowner. "This is the *Creole*."

"And who is that man?"

"The chief engineer."

There came into the old man's mind the thought that, after all, he had crossed the ocean to find a mare's nest; that the girl had been mistaken, that she had perhaps misinterpreted the motives of Martin Grimm, and jumped to conclusions upon little evidence too speedily.

And this thought must have crept into his face, for Edith spoke suddenly to contradict him.

"You think I have been wrong," she said hastily; "that the plot to scuttle the steamer has been only in my imagination. There is something here I cannot explain. But at least Grant Heath could not have been mistaken, and the fact that he all but lost his life at the hands of Captain Hudson is no imaginary incident; nor have I dreamt that he boarded a strange barque, in mid-ocean, of which the *Creole's* crew were in sole possession."

At that moment there appeared at the companion a tall, bony-framed man with black whiskers sticking rigidly from under his chin.

"That is Captain Hudson," said the owner in an even voice. "We will go aboard and speak to him."

Captain Hudson usually resented the visits of curious strangers to his ship when in port, and he turned with an offensive string of remarks on the tale of his tongue wherewith to greet the old gentleman who was coming down the gangway with a girl at his heels. But the words froze on his lips. A sudden speechless terror seized him. He forgot all the well-worded, plausible story of the *Creole's* strange voyage that had already been credibly received by the authorities. He saw nothing but menace in the appearance of this mild old man.

Overcoming himself by an effort, yet not concealing the greenish pallor on his face that made plain the emotion that vibrated within him, he turned and clumsily saluted Mr. Channing.

"I am surprised to see you here, sir," he said.

"And I am surprised to see *you* here, captain," replied Mr. Channing, with a suggestion of emphasis on the pronoun.

Hudson looked a little doubtful.

"You mean we are several days late, sir?" he said, tentatively.

"I mean, I expected you to come in aboard a barque."

Hudson stiffened slightly. The pallor on his face seemed to grow more marked, and there came with it a tightening of the mouth. He realised that he was standing on the brink of an abyss where a single false step might bring destruction. The next few minutes might change him into a ruined man. He was at bay, and he meant to fight.

"I do not understand," he said, with a furtive look at the girl. "But it has been a bad voyage. We are lucky to have arrived at all."

"Bad weather, eh?"

"Yes, sir, very bad—wind dead ahead all the time. Perhaps you would like to see the log-book, sir?"

"Yes, I think that would be interesting. All your crew aboard?"

"All except the second mate and two men. Mr. Heath, I am sorry to say, was lost overboard a few hours out of Fayal; the two men were killed in defending the ship from a piratical attack made by another ship upon us when we were laid up for repairs."

The ship-owner's brow lowered.

"This is a serious business," he said.

"But is Mr. Heath not aboard?" broke in Edith, half fearfully.

"No, miss," answered Hudson, softly; "you will see it down in the log how Mr. Heath was drowned. It's very sad, and it's been an unlucky voyage. I've been sick myself, and I'd only half recovered when Mr. Talbot got wounded powerful bad in that fight, so that he's lying jolly well sick in his bunk now. I've had to do double duty myself for some days on an end."

"And you have not seen Mr. Heath since?" she pursued.

"No," he replied; "the Atlantic doesn't give up it's dead."

"Then you didn't see him when he discovered you ill with fever aboard the barque *Foam?*" she exclaimed in an intense voice.

Hudson met the attack coolly.

"I've never heard of such a ship, miss," he said.

He went down the companion, the two following behind, the one hopelessly mystified, the other with a vague terror at her heart.

Yet she felt a strange fierceness come over her; a hatred and fury against this man who had tried, and perhaps successfully now, for all she knew, to encompass Grant Heath's death. And the thought chilled her to the heart. She faced him with resolute eyes as he placed the log-book on the table.

"The losing of Mr. Heath was the first bad misfortune we had," he said. "We supposed he toppled over the taffrail while taking in awning poles, though no one actually saw him fall overboard. Look here, it's entered in Mr. Talbot's handwriting. Then came bad weather and breakdowns with the engines. We repaired once in mid-ocean, and again under the shelter of a cay south of the Great Abaca, and while we were laid up we were visited one night by a crew from another ship that had hove-to not far off, who demanded grub and 'bacca, which we hadn't to spare. Then they tried to get by force what they wanted, and boarded us, and we had a scrap for it. We lost two men killed, and mostly got everybody wounded. Then, with Key West a hundred miles astern, our propeller stripped, and we had to ship another. By gum! it's been a tough voyage."

"Yes, Captain Hudson," said Edith slowly, "and that is, to be candid with you, a 'tough' yarn."

She was used to talking with her uncle's skippers in their own way. She spoke without hesitation. Mr. Channing had dropped on to a locker, as though with tacit consent he had left the matter in her hands.

A curious light came into Hudson's eyes.

"I don't understand you, miss," he said respectfully, waving his hand towards the log-book. "It is all in there."

"Yes, but the truth is not there," she retorted. "You have not written down, Captain Hudson, that Mr. Heath was lost overboard because you gave him a cowardly and murderous blow as he stood on the taffrail that night after leaving Fayal!"

Hudson started, and gripped the table-edge.

"It is a lie!" he answered hoarsely. "Who has told you this?"

"Mr. Heath himself!"

"Mr. Heath himself?" echoed Hudson, thickly, the fear written plainly in his eyes.

"Yes; therefore I know that to be a lying entry, and if part be false, as much more as may have seemed convenient to you is possibly untrue."

"Where have you seen him?"

"At Fayal, and I know, from a steamer where he was passenger with myself, he went aboard a barque in mid-ocean, with two seamen, to render assistance to the vessel which was in distress, and where he found yourself ill, Captain Hudson, with your crew helpless."

"I have never been off this vessel!" shouted Hudson.

"But you were seen off."

"By whom?"

"By Grant Heath——"

"Ha! this is a cursed conspiracy!" snapped Hudson, virulently.

"And the doctor of the *Adrian*," added Edith.

Hudson stopped short. Here was danger indeed. Grant Heath was dead, but the surgeon of the *Adrian* was not. And his would be fatal evidence.

"I don't know what you are getting at," he said sullenly.

"I am getting at the truth," returned Edith, relentlessly. "I am sifting your clumsy falsehoods. I know of your infamous compact with Mr. Grimm, and I know of the money he paid you. You have not succeeded in carrying out your bargain wholly, for this ship is safe, but what of the other part?"

"What other part?" muttered Hudson huskily.

"Where is Mr. Heath?"

"I have told you. He was drowned off Fayal," cried Hudson, in reckless, illogical reiteration. "I have not seen him since. Who can prove to the contrary?"

"I can!"

There were dramatic possibilities in this interruption. On a stage it might have been made much of, but life is woefully inartistic, taking no thought of appropriateness of time, or place, or scene, bringing in *dénouements* at the wrong moment, having no care of the importance of an effective curtain.

They turned their eyes upon the open door of a berth, and saw an old man, with chalk-white face, dressed in ragged pyjamas, clinging to the door-frame.

"Mr. Talbot!" burst out Hudson, "get to your berth, sir! Has your wound made you jolly well mad?"

The mate reeled forward, like one intoxicated. "I am dying," he said, clinging to the edge of the table. "I know I shall not get over this, but I—I—am not going to my account without—telling what I know." He turned a trembling, accusing finger on Hudson. "I saw you drop Heath overboard that night, after we recaptured this ship, when he was wounded and unconscious. You thought I did not see you, but I did—and—and——" His voice ended in a ghastly little moan, and he fell fainting across the table.

Hudson turned like a wolf at bay. "You cannot

believe that poor fool," he cried, with fierce insistence; "his wound has sent him mad."

"After the *recapture* of the *Creole?*" interposed Mr. Channing, dryly. "I think I begin to see a little light now."

"Oh, you do, do you?" cried Hudson, with desperate insolence. "Thunder! this is a plot to ruin me! I am charged with murdering my second mate, am I?"

"That is it, you cowardly scoundrel!" cried Edith, fiercely.

White-faced, Samuel Hudson turned to the companion-stairs, knowing, for all his blustering defiance, that he was a ruined man.

As he put his foot on the bottom stair, a form darkened the way above. A gasp of fear broke from his lips as his eyes fell upon the figure descending towards him.

For it was the dead risen up to accuse him.

"*Heath!*" he muttered under his breath.

But the other took no notice of him, hastening down into the saloon, since he had learnt from the chief engineer who was there.

Hudson staggered out on deck, and glanced wildly round with hunted eyes. He took no notice of the chief engineer's importunities about the unsatisfactory working of some gear; he was oblivious of the fact that the riverside postman awaited his pleasure to deliver a letter to him; he saw nothing of the hurrying life on the levée nor the crowded ships on the river. Only was he conscious of himself, of his grim position, of the measure of accusation that was so full against him.

He took the letter mechanically. He looked at the writing, and with a little start saw that it was from his wife. He was about to slit open the envelope, when a voice pronouncing his name in greeting stayed his hand. When he turned round, he saw one whom he believed to be three thousand miles away.

"Mr. Grimm!" he muttered, open-eyed with amazement. "You here?"

"Yes, captain, it looks like it, eh?" answered Martin Grimm, easily. "I'm glad to see you have arrived safely."

"You're glad, are you? I should have thought you wouldn't be. By thunder, but you've come in time! There's old Channing and his niece below, with Heath and that doddering, mad old Talbot; and they've got scent of the whole shooting-match. Perhaps you can quieten 'em—I can't."

Martin Grimm creased his brows critically. "I'm sure I don't know what you mean, captain," he said. "If you will be a little more explicit——"

Hudson's brow lowered darkly, the lines about his mouth grew harder than ever. His equanimity was being strained to snapping point. He growled out a curse.

"I mean," he explained in a hoarse whisper, "that the little arrangement between you and me to pile up this craft and get rid of Heath, is known. I tried to do for Heath, but it ain't come off, when all the time I thought it was successful; and things is pretty thick just now."

"Arrangement between you and me?" echoed Grimm, with astonishment in his voice. "You must be dreaming, captain. I know of no such thing."

The other paused a moment, as if requiring time to realise the significance of this denial; then a sudden, maddening fury seemed to break out on his face. His whole body vibrated with passion.

"You are going to leave me in the lurch, are you?" he hissed. "That means you are going to leave me to face it alone?"

Martin Grimm shrugged his shoulders delicately, and took out a cigarette.

"Right, Mr. Martin Grimm! I'll blow the whole gaff on you!"

He turned swiftly on his heel, and came face to face with Mr. Channing, while Grant Heath and Edith Hopewell stood in the background.

"It's right, sir," he exclaimed in malignant recklessness. "I've done all you've charged me with, and more. And do you want to know who egged me on—who paid me for the job? He stands there!"

He pointed an ugly, accusing finger at the junior partner, who had made a move to greet the others. Then he turned away from them with an oath, and tore open the letter with the air of a man who, having played his last card, and lost, was perfectly indifferent to the consequences.

As he put his fingers into the envelope there came into his hand a coloured slip of paper with a gleam of red in one corner. He unfolded it and saw the cheque that Martin Grimm had paid to him weeks before. And across the top of it was written the ominous words: "Refer to drawer."

He looked at it as one stupefied. Then he unfolded the letter which accompanied it, and his furious eyes read the words the faded woman at Greenwich had written.

He seemed to stagger as though under a blow. He took no notice of those standing by, save Martin Grimm. He fixed his gaze on this man, whose gold had tempted him, then walked towards him with face white as death, holding the dishonoured cheque in his hand.

Martin Grimm was leaning against the starboard rail, smoking his cigarette unconcernedly. Before he realised the other's intention, he was

caught by the throat. Hudson gripped hard with one hand, while he thrust the cheque in Grimm's face with the other.

"You black-hearted traitor!" he cried, hoarse with passion. "You have dishonoured this cheque, and my wife is in the street, starving."

Grimm could make no reply, for the relentless hand clutched his throat too hard; but instinctively he struck out, beating his white fists against the ship-master's hard face. His puny blows had no effect save to infuriate his assailant the more. In an instant the two were locked in each other's arms, words of hate and cries of fear mingling into an incoherent babble as they struggled.

The next moment the little drama became tragedy. With savage momentum they staggered heavily against the edge of the rail, where a gap had been made, the better to unship some cargo into a lighter, and, swaying a moment, there came an agonising scream, and then a splash as they fell down into the muddy waters of the swift-flowing river.

ENVOI.

"I CANNA help, mon, compeerin' the graund peacefulness o' this homeward voyage wi' the vera sorrowfu' time we had when that scoondrel Hudson was skipper."

The chief engineer filled his pipe slowly and deliberately, and nodded his head reminiscently.

"We had a confoundedly rough time, and no mistake," said the third. "Mr. Talbot seems to have shaken down into the old man's place first rate."

"Losh! but it's guid for this craft that there are ane or twa reliable men in the engine-room. I mind on the voyage oot, hoo the scoondrels forrad got at ma wee drap whusky, which I'd got aboard, no as a beverage, but sae tae be handy in case o' a leetle indeesposition, which, like enoo, ye'll hae noticed I'm subject to. Aye, and they drunk it doon wi'oot invitation frae me, which shows the vera bad disorder that was aboard. It's a guid thing I was able tae keep ma heid under such trying circumstances. Losh! now, I mind when I was vera yoong—

"Mr. McPherson!"

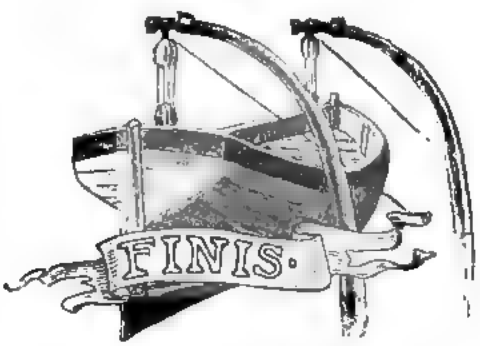
The voice came from above.

"Hullo, Meester Heath!"

"Are you coming on deck for a smoke before turning in?"

"Aye, aye, I'll be wuth ye shortly. It'll be aboot the lassie he'll be wantin' ter talk, I'll bet ma pipe," murmured Mr. McPherson, as he ascended the ladder. "Ah weel, ah weel, I mind, when I was yoonger mysel'——"

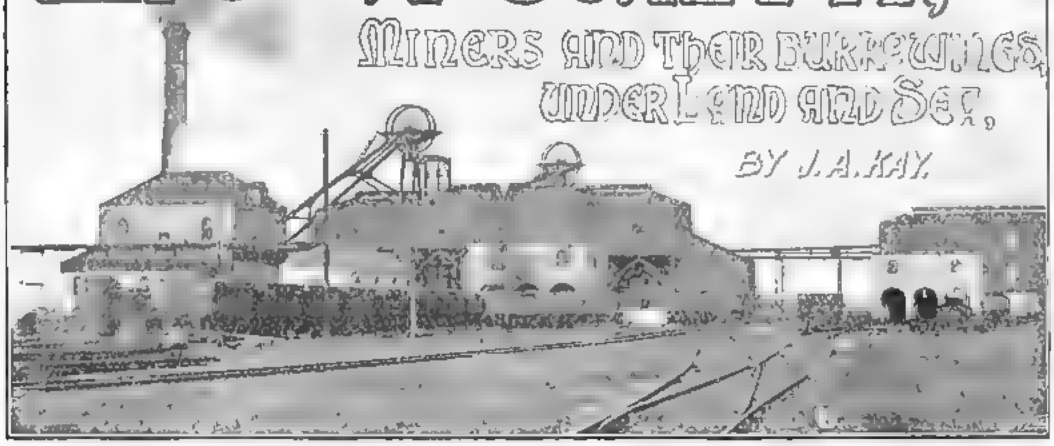
But the chief engineer's soliloquy was lost in the hiss and grind of the engines.



LIFE IN A COAL PIT,

MINERS AND THEIR BURROWINGS, UNDER LAND AND SEA.

BY J. A. KAY.



WOODHORN COLLIERY, NORTHUMBERLAND.

WE stood on the barren Cumberland cliffs, looking out over the Irish Sea. There were four of us—a mining engineer, his assistant, the manager of the colliery, and the writer.

Thirty miles west-south-west loomed the Isle of Man, and away to the north was outlined the Wigtown coast of Scotland. Those who are accustomed to associate the seaside with niggers, donkeys, and bathing machines, or with one of Nature's solitudes where there is nothing to disturb you except the tuneful "swelling of the voiceful sea," would be equally surprised at the appearance of this bleak northern coast. As far as the eye can see, all along the water's edge are collieries and steel and iron works; each with one or more chimneys belching forth a continuous stream of black smoke, whilst at night the lurid flames of the furnaces glare out like beacons all along the coast. In fact, if the ghosts of Macaulay's old burghers of Carlisle ever roam in these parts, they must think they are still living in the days of the Armada.

But the strange scenes above-ground had little attraction for us on that occasion, as we were intent upon diving down into the stranger ones below. The above-ground part of a coal pit is a noisy, nerve-destroying place. Grimy little engines drawing grimier trucks come whirling and shrieking round unexpected corners, and one stumbles along over railway sidings, past a maze of machine-shops and engine-rooms, which resound with the rhythmical thud, thud, of the engines that pump air into and water out of the pit, haul the cages up and down the shaft, and supply the motive power required to work a network of cable railways hundreds of feet down in the darkness below.

AT WORK DOWN BELOW. A MINER UNDERCUTTING A SEAM OF COAL.

"Lamps!" queried a greasy

BRICKLAYERS GOING DOWN AN OLD SHAFT TO DO SOME REPAIRS.

looking little man, peering out of an oil-stained doorway as the manager approached. We followed this twentieth century Aladdin into his chamber of mysteries. A modern safety lamp for miners is a weird and wonderful contrivance. Compared with it the famous Davy lamp is as a horse to a locomotive. It is locked by electricity and an electric current is the only key that can unfasten it, and as miners are not in the habit of carrying batteries about in their pockets there is no undoing it in order to light a pipe. If exposed to fire-damp, the explosive gas found in coal mines, it instantly goes out.

Our four lamps were in readiness. Aladdin took them in turn, placed them on a little electrical contrivance and lighted them without the aid of matches. In broad daylight it was difficult to see whether they were alight or not, but in the darkness down below one has to be thankful for small mercies. In the old days the Whitehaven miners often used to work by the aid of a phosphorescent fish skin picked up on the sea-shore.

Lamps in hand, we clambered up the steps to the pit's mouth. Here the noise was deafening. Every few minutes the cage arrived at the top of the shaft bringing up two trucks filled with coal. With a clang and a rattle they were wheeled over the iron flooring and tipped down a shoot. The coal rolls down this on to a huge dancing screen pierced with holes. All the smallest pieces of coal tumble through the holes, but the larger ones go on dancing and jumping and rattling till they reach the edge of the iron screen and tumble on the next one below. In this manner the big lumps of coal travel onwards down the sloping screens. On each succeeding tray the holes are of a slightly larger size, so that only the largest pieces reach the last screen. And during the final part of the journey they have to run the gauntlet of a small army of women, who pick out all the pieces of slate and slack which have got mixed up with the coal. Underneath each of the screens is a funnel-shaped shoot, down which the coal tumbles into a truck below. By this means the coal is automatically sorted after it comes up out of the pit.

A MEETING OF THE ROADS.

At length we stood at the pit's mouth, ready for our descent. Several electric bells tinkled, and the truck-laden cage ceased to bob up every few minutes from the nether regions. Soon it arrived empty. We took the place of the trucks, standing facing each other, and grasping the iron bar in the centre with one hand and the lamp and stick with the other.

"Are you ready?"

"Right!"

"Tinkle-tinkle." Then a gentle sinking sensation, which in a moment or two developed into a wild, nightmare like descent. If you are not used to that sort of thing you involuntarily hold your breath for the bump that doesn't come to wake

you out of your dream. Whilst going down a pit shaft one experiences all the effects of the gradual change from daylight to twilight and night compressed into the space of a few seconds. Soon the descent became gentler again, and changed into a mere "twopenny tube" lift motion. Then all was still, and I staggered out into the darkness.

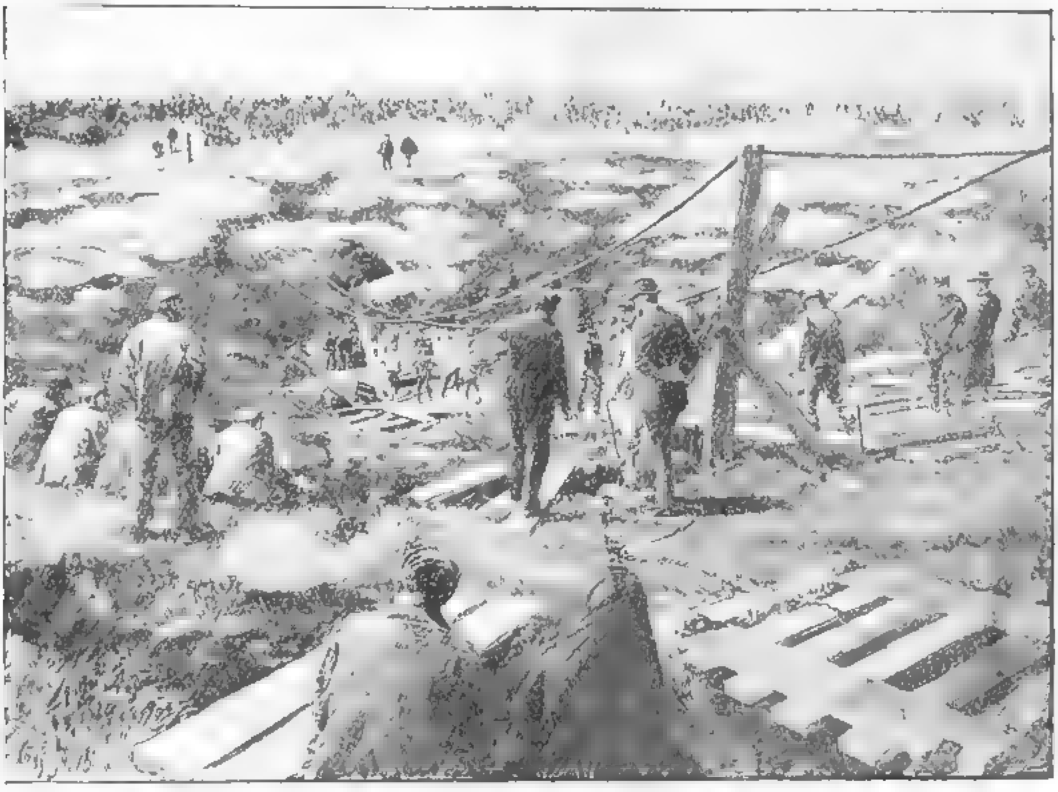
After groping our way along a narrow passage we entered a strange little room, the floor and walls and roof of which were made of nothing but coal. We placed our lamps on the table in the centre and sat down on the wooden benches around it. The only other occupant of what might well have been some conspirators' secret meeting-place was a grimy watchman reading the newspaper by the dim rays of his lamp.

"We'll sit here for a few minutes," explained the manager, "so as to get used to the darkness before we start on our walk to the workings."

The sight of the stretchers in one corner all in readiness for use at a moment's warning was not calculated to inspire very cheerful thoughts.

In single file we started on our four-mile walk to the workings. After threading a network of passages near the foot of the shaft, where the various "roads" meet, we arrived at the tramway terminus, lighted by a row of lamps fastened to the wall. Here, to the accompaniment of much noise and shouting, the trains of trucks are unhooked from the endless rope which hauls them backwards and forwards from one part of the workings to the shaft. In some pits one can ride in the trucks between the shaft and the workings, but when, as in the Wellington pit, the roads slope steadily downwards, following the dip of the coal seam, the trucks are so liable to run off the rails that riding in them is prohibited.

All the while the noise made by the cable is bewildering. The guide wheels rattle merrily round, and the cable creaks and groans, rising from the ground where there is a change of gradient. Anyone accustomed to the pit can tell how far off these trucks are by the height of the rope. This is very useful, inasmuch as two sets of trucks passing each other completely fill the tunnel. If one passes on the down road you have to step on to the up, and *vice versâ*, or into the



THE SCENE AFTER THE SUBSIDENCE AT DONIBRISTLE COLLIERY, FIFE, N.B., LAST AUGUST.
(Drawn by Charles Sheldon.)

Google

HEIGHTENING A ROAD SO THAT IT WILL BE BIG ENOUGH FOR PONIES TO PASS THROUGH.

refuge holes which are provided at intervals of twenty yards. Every now and then all is quiet for a minute or two, as a fresh train is being hooked on to the rope at either end. Then the creaking and groaning of the rope and whirring of the wheels recommence.

MINE INSPECTOR EXAMINING A BORE HOLE WHERE OLD WORKINGS HAVE BEEN TAPPED.

Suddenly I felt I was going down a very steep hill, and stumbled along merrily for a time, until—Stars!

"Don't forget the roof," laughed the burly man of Newcastle at the head of the procession, as he caught the cap which was swiftly disappearing into the darkness, having fallen on to the cable. "Follow in my footsteps, and when I stoop, stoop too!

"Full set!" he sang out a minute or two later. The cable to the right of us creaked, and groaned, and danced, and writhed by several feet above the ground. Then a few yards in front something white loomed out of the darkness—a whitewashed bogie, dragging after it a set of coal-laden trucks from the workings to the pit's mouth

"Empty set behind," shouted a voice out of the blackness at my back. But it was a false alarm, for at that moment the cable stopped dead so that another set might be added, and as the trucks only travel four miles an hour, you get along faster than they do, as you don't have to make any stoppages.

By the time the cable started again we had caught up the set in front. We had nearly passed it by running along the up-road, when the guide shouted out: "Full set! Side off!" And there was just comfortable time to run back a few paces and follow the empty set till the full set had lumbered by. It occasionally happens that miners who have known the pit for years get injured or crushed to death through attempting to run past these sets of trucks.

"Full set!" and another train goes rumbling along, dimly visible by our lamps' feeble rays. And so on for an hour and three-quarters, though it seemed more like half a day. Then one of the party remarked that we had walked four miles out under the sea! Yet we were still some distance from the actual workings, though on both sides stretched acres and acres of abandoned workings, where the miners had been busy sixty, seventy, eighty or so years ago.

The front man suddenly seemed to disappear through the wall to his left. Remembering his instructions, I tried to do the same, and succeeded. The wall was a canvas curtain, and we found ourselves in the stables, where the ponies live far down below the fishes at the bottom of the deep blue sea. We encountered plenty of these canvas curtains further on. They are used in connection with the ventilation, as air in a coal mine has many whimsical tricks, and a rooted objection to going round corners unless compelled to.

What of the stables? They were just like ordinary stables above ground, only darker than usual, being dimly lighted by pit lamps. A

veterinary surgeon was busy tending a pony's hoof, whilst one of the ostlers complained to the manager about this pony's habit of running away. Runaway ponies in a coal mine are not pleasant to meet with.

Leaving the stables, we started again on our tramp. After a while twinkling lights glimmered in the distance ahead. Then men's voices could be heard, and we came to another railway junction. This was the end of the main tram-road, and of one cable. Other cable roads branched off in several directions to the various workings, but these cables ran at a slower speed—two miles an hour, instead of four, as on the main roads.

Another Aladdin stepped out from a black cavern, and, by the aid of a magical instrument worked by a battery, brightened our lamps for us; and we set off again. More empty and full sets lumbered past. More stumbles. More banging of heads against the roof. More mud. More darkness, and, at last, more lights ahead. The end of the second cable railway had been reached. Grimy, sturdy lads leading ponies, yoked to trucks, appeared and disappeared out of mazy passages filled with a darkness you could almost feel.

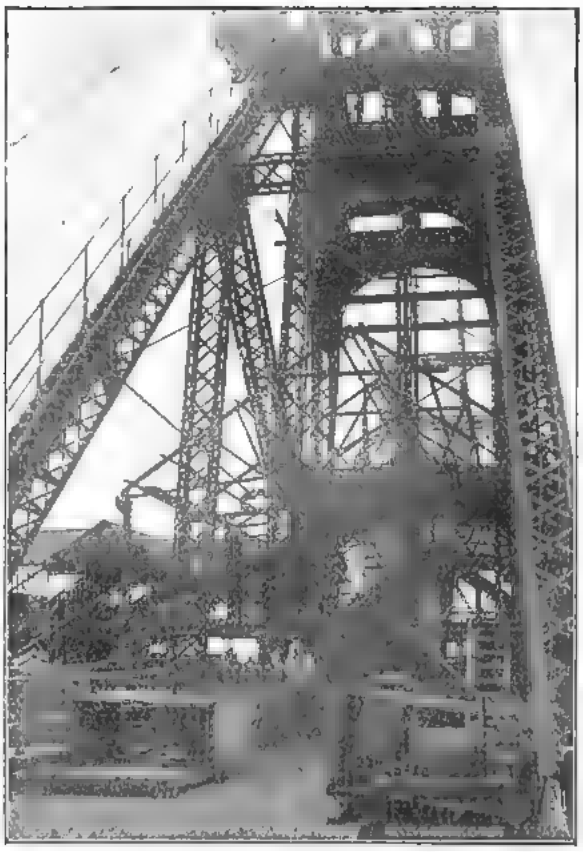
THE MAN IN THE ILLUSTRATION ABOVE IS EXAMINING A FALLEN-IN WORKING TO SEE IF ANY GAS HAS COLLECTED.

THE PHOTOGRAPH ON THE LEFT SHOWS THE WELLINGTON PIT, WHITEHAVEN, CUMBERLAND, WHICH, ALONG WITH THOSE CONNECTED WITH IT, RUNS FIVE AND SIX MILES OUT UNDER THE SEA.

THE PICTURE BELOW SHOWS TWO MEN SETTING A PROP IN A HIGH SEAM.

I slipped, and in struggling to regain a foothold found myself embracing a pony which was standing still waiting for its truck. A few more twists and turns, and we arrived at the head of the working farthest out under the sea.

Four almost naked miners were placing dynamite charges in the dead end of the passage. Our eight lamps gave the scene quite a brilliant aspect after the darkness we had passed through. It was a strange sight to see those sweating Titans as they crouched in that rocky passage far down under the deep sea floor, and a wonderful thought that above lay the great ocean and all its myriad life, and



ROTHERHAM MAIN COLLIERY.

This photograph gives a good idea of the amount of machinery there is at the top of a pit shaft.

further up still, on its surface, steamers and sailing vessels. Presently the tapping ceased. The "fault" of rock was ready to be blown up; thus would a way be carved through it to the seam of coal beyond. We all crawled back the passage to shelter behind its first bend. A miner connected two wires, which lay along the floor, with a box, which he handed to me.

"Press that button and turn the handle six times," he explained.

"What then?" I inquired.

"You'll see," laughed the manager.

I obeyed orders. It was merely like ringing up someone on a telephone. One—two—three—four—five—an ear-splitting crash, then a low rumble and smoke—that was all, but several feet of solid rock had been blown away. We waited to see the effect of the explosion, and then crawled on through more winding passages, past more ponies and trucks to a place which had been making some gas and needed inspection, and then to another spot where the sea dripped through. Here there was quite a steady drop, drop, drop, of salt water which made everything around very wet and sticky. But it was explained to me that there was no fear of the sea breaking through, there being about 1,200ft. of intervening solid strata; and in these under-the-sea mines, the engineers make use of many clever draining contrivances for dealing with exigencies of this kind. In fact, on one occasion, when a bad fire broke out, the sea was admitted into the shaft by means of a level drift made from the shore in order to extinguish it.

We had now reached the busiest part of the mine, and were right in the very heart of the main workings. In many cases the miners could stand up to their full height, and work with pick and shovel just like ordinary navvies in the daylight. Others had not such a comfortable time of it, but lay at full length hewing away under masses of coal and rock. It all depends upon the size of the coal-seam, whether it is a deep or a shallow one. Our photographs give a wonderfully realistic idea of what the life in a coal mine really looks like; in fact, further description would be superfluous.

Had we wished we could have tramped

HOOKING ON A FULL SET OF WAGONS TO THE UNDERGROUND CABLE RAILWAY.

for many more miles along these strange dark passages under the bed of the sea, as all the various pits along the coast have underground connections. Losing one's way would be a very easy business, and it is weird and gruesome to think of some hapless visitor wandering about this strange submarine maze until strength failed him to wander further. And on mentioning this thought to my friend, the mining engineer, he told me that on January 31st, 1854, Thomas Johnston, said to be eighty years of age, employed as a lamp-locker underground, went down Wellington Pit and was never seen or heard of again. He was supposed to have strayed away in the old workings, and either to have fallen down a staple pit or been buried under some fall of roof. Nearly the whole pit's crew turned out in search of him, and hundreds of pounds were spent in shifting falls, but all in vain; no trace was ever found of him, and his fate is still a mystery.

We returned to the shaft by another main road which runs off at an angle with the one we entered by. Roughly speaking, the mine is arranged in a sort of triangle, the three sides of which are formed by the main roads and the workings.

ON THE LEFT IS A "TRAPPER," WHO HAS JUST OPENED A DOOR FOR THE PONY AND WAGON TO PASS THROUGH.

On our journey back we met a shift of miners going in to work. A long procession of tiny lamps bobbed past, out of blackness into blackness, with a vague glimpse of their bearers as they passed close by.

Long before this we had become uncomfortably hot. When you first go down a pit the heat is not very noticeable, but it does not take long to become apparent, and gets more so the longer you remain below. In view of this most of the miners are not much encumbered with clothes, especially the hewers who cut out the coal; for, in a mine, there are two distinct classes of workers—those who actually cut out the coal, and the engineers and labourers whose duty it is to keep the mine in good working order, and see that all the props and roads are safe.

"How far have we gone now?" I inquired at length.

"About a mile," was the dispiriting response.

"Three miles more, then?"

"Yes, and all up hill."

But the end came at last, or you would not be reading this article!

[Our photographs are reproduced by kind permission of Mr. A. Sopwith, of Cannock Chase, and Mr. R. W. Moore, Whitehaven.]

THE "HEADGEAR" OF THE ROTHERHAM MAIN PIT.

THE BIG LUNCHEONERS SAT IN EASY ATTITUDES ROUND THE FIRE.

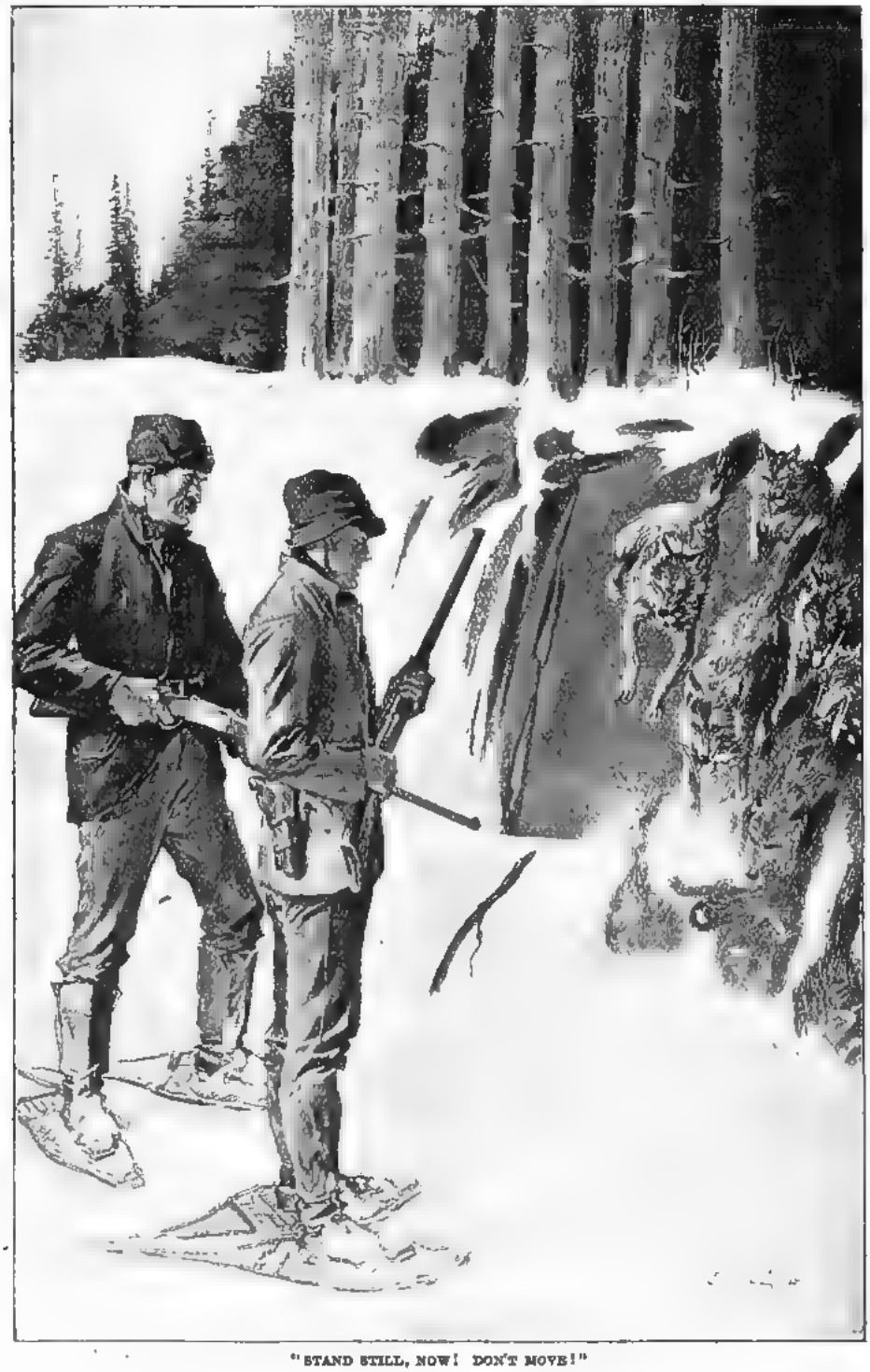
A STORY OF THE BIG TIMBER.

By Irving Bacheller. Illustrated by E. Hering.

The snow was six feet deep on the level around Lavery's camp. There was a little opening in the evergreen canopy of the forest overhead, and the stars in the cold zenith shivered as one looked at them through the blast of heat and smoke that rose from the chimney. I stood many a night at the door of the big log shanty and saw the sparks shoot up and crackle in the leeward boughs of hemlock. It was forty miles to the clearing on the southern side of the camp, but at every point in the northern semicircle of the compass there was a trackless and unmeasured deep of timber. At a certain opening in the ridge, near Lavery's, one could look ten miles across a rolling sea of green parted by the frozen waters of the Ottawa that lay like a belt of white in the valley. The "big skid" flanked the river at the end of the trail, down which "hawbuck" and teamster started in sulky silence before daylight, and up which they came halloaing merrily at supper-time. Then the "hawbucks" stalled their oxen in the big shed, and the teamsters put away the horses that came in hoary with frost. I was the cook's helper at Lavery's, and had won fleeting fame in the tossing of flapjacks. My hand had lifted the flapjack to a proud position of indispensability on the upper Ottawa. For the rest, beans and molasses, salt pork and potatoes, bread and butter and apple sauce were the most popular items in the "filling." The table was spread before the roaring fire of logs every evening, and the men sat down to eat in their shirt-sleeves. The keen air went to their blood like wine in the work of the day, and the shanty roared with laughter as they ate. Songs were the solace of the evening hours, while the big lumbermen lay lounging on the bunks or sat in easy attitudes round the fire. The brogue of Scotch and Irish and the quaint dialect of Frenchmen mingled in their talk. There was the brute majesty of the lion in these men as they shook the mighty muscles of breast and arm in their laughter, or when the furrows moved and tightened on their brows in the stern dignity of anger. There were a number of men who could sing doleful ballads, and one who often harangued them with mock oratory that provoked noisy applause. The ancient game of "Whack Sal," in which two men, blindfolded, struck at each other with straps, was sometimes proposed, but not unless there had been drinking, in which old grudges were apt to be revived.

These northern woodsmen love the smell of powder and the feel of a gun. It is an inborn, over-ruling passion with most of them. Generally an idle hand had a gun in it, and the itching palm was one that had long been deprived of its birthright. These godless men of the forest spent their Sundays, in good weather, hunting on snow-shoes, and the roar of their guns rushed through the timber and bellowed in the distant waste. It happened sometimes that a luckless hunter ventured too far from camp, and never got back for one reason or another. I heard much of one "poor Tom" who had gone away hunting of a Sunday the winter before, and met his end somewhere in the great wilderness. Occasionally two or more of the men would wake in the dead of night, when the timber wolves were howling, and get up and peer out of the window and speak of "poor Tom."

One cold Sunday morn in mid-winter I started over the snow for Long Pond with a brawny Scotchman known as McVeigh. That was four miles beyond the Ottawa, and hard walking in the light snow. We wounded a caribou on the farther side of the river, and followed its trail of crimson for miles to the top of the great ridge in the north, and then westward through the burnt timber. The sky was clouded over, and the cold unusually severe. McVeigh seemed to know every tree in the forest, and we were continually coming upon landmarks that reminded him of a story. We had stopped a moment to light our pipes, and were striding with long steps through the soft snow. The woods were silent, and I could hear only the creak of our snow-shoes and McVeigh puffing at his pipe. He halted suddenly, and turned his ear to listen. I could hear then a faint but growing sound in the far distance at the back of us.



"STAND STILL, NOW! DON'T MOVE!"

"It's wolves," said the old woodsman, "an' they're on this line o' blood. We'd better leave it an' make for the top o' the ridge."

We turned to the south at once, intending to cross the ridge and make our way down the valley to camp. It was a stiffer climb than we expected, however, with the snow-shoes, and even before we got to the top that fearful echo was ringing in the near woods. Little avalanches of snow fell on our heads as we hurried in the underbrush. We strode through the open timber at the top of our speed, and as I turned to my companion I noticed a mighty serious look in his face. He stopped suddenly and looked back a moment.

"They're out fer man-meat to-day—that's sure," he said. "I'm thinkin' we must 'a' got some o' that blood on our shoes."

There was a great slash in the timber right before us. The steep southern side had been stripped quite bare by the lumbermen for a distance above and below the track of our snow-shoes. The line of the ridge swerved northward some ten rods at this point and then came back, describing a sort of oxbow, walled with rock, a hundred feet or more in width, and the sides of it fell sharply to the river valley fifty feet below. From Sunday to Sunday the sky had been thick with snow that flew before the dry wind like down. Every flake that fell in the big slash had been driven to this rocky gore by the wind coming up the river out of the east. There was full fifty feet of snow in the deep pit which, under a slender crust, lay light and dry as a heap of feathers. On the far side the trees stood to their boughs in the drift. The great gloomy cavern under the canopy of the forest was choked with snow. McVeigh picked up a fallen branch of dead pine as we came to the bend, then cautiously stepped out upon the dome-like top of the great drift. I was a mere boy of eighteen, and but for the coolness of my companion I should have lost my head and probably my life.

"Hold there! Step careful, now," said he, as I came running after him, frightened at the near sound of the wolves.

"Ye might go t' yer ears if ye broke it here," said McVeigh, and, as he spoke, he thrust the long rod of timber down into the heap of snow.

"See there!" he continued; "the weight o' yer finger sends it down out o' sight. We'll stop and rest awhile, an' ye'll see a bit o' fun here."

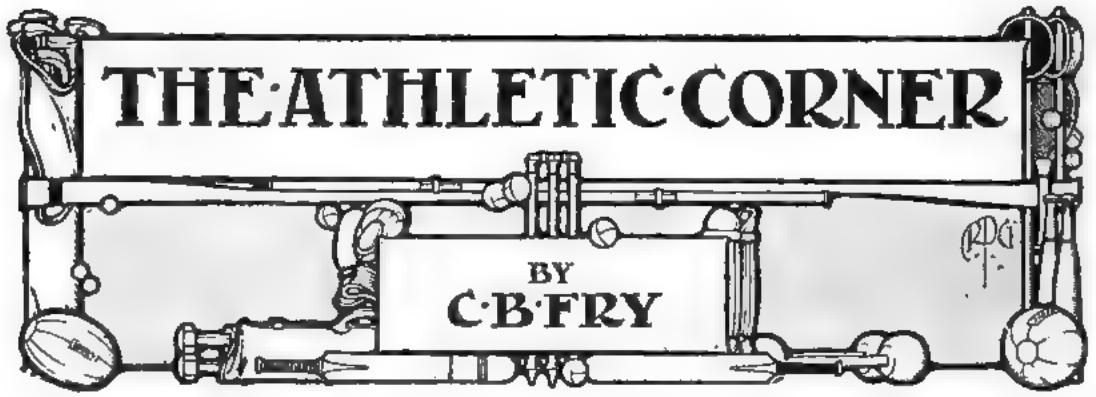
We crept, with shortened steps, to the white summit of snow near the far side of the pit, and its slender sheathing cracked and crumbled under our shoe-frames, though, fortunately, it was strong enough to hold us.

"George Washington!" said McVeigh, in a sharp voice, as we turned about, "look there! Stand still now! Don't move!"

There was a fearsome ring and echo in the air as the grey pack wallowed up the top of the ridge in the dead timber. There was near a score of them, so McVeigh claimed—and he would have it always that he had counted them—with legs so long, as I now remember, a fair-sized dog could walk underneath them, and they ran in a close bunch, the snow spray flying over them. They were the big, grey timber wolves. Now that the danger had come close, I was quite cool, and when they stopped at the brink I actually began to count them. It seems incredible as I think of it now, after all these years.

"The leaders give a jump an' the whole pack o' them stopped when I hollered," said McVeigh in telling the story, when we were safe in camp. "Then they made for us, jumping clear every move o' their legs. There was a fall o' six feet at the edge o' the pit, an' they jumped in a bunch. The big heap o' snow trembled when they hit it, an' they sunk as if it had been water. We heard a smothered roar, an' seen the splinters o' crust fly an' the white snow shut over 'em. Then it stirred like the boil in a pot, an' caved an' ran down at the break like sand in a hollow, an' then it was still." That is the end of the story.

We got to camp as quickly as our legs would take us, and told how we wallowed the wolves. The boys listened with much interest, but not a man would believe us: The first big thaw that came, we took them over and showed them what there was there in the deep of the pit.



By special arrangement, Mr. C. B. Fry has undertaken to contribute to no magazine intended for boys or athletes except THE CAPTAIN. *Readers are requested to bear in mind that we have secured, especially for their benefit, the services of the first writer on athletics in the world. Mr. Fry will reply to a limited number of correspondents by post every month, providing they are members of* THE CAPTAIN CLUB. *All applications for advice from the Athletic Editor, as well as from other* CAPTAIN *"experts," should be accompanied by* THE CAPTAIN CLUB *Coupon which will be found in one of the advertisement pages.*—THE EDITOR.

HOW TO RACE.

SUCCESS in athletics, my friends, comes in a greater degree to him who plans and prepares than to him who leaves things to the last moment and trusts to the inspiration of the actual contest. This you will readily believe, for I doubt not you have observed that the same holds good universally in human pursuits—Euclid exams., for instance. Don't you know the fellow who curries favour with the fancy that he can get up his subject the night before the exam.? Quite so. Yes, and the fellow who imagines he can amuse himself with slack Latin proses all the term, and yet slip in an extra good one on the fatal day. But it does not answer—that sort of happy-go-lucky procrastination. In fact, what wins races is careful preparation, skilfully organised training, and the slowly acquired habit of good method. If you have studied past volumes of THE CAPTAIN you have come across, either in articles specially devoted to the subject or in scattered "answers," a lot of well-meant and carefully thought-out advice about how to train and practise for various races, long and short, and for hurdling, jumping, and other events. If not, you are the loser. Anyway, no mortal being, spin he never so wise a yarn, can tell you how to provide yourself in three or four days with the training you should have gained in the course of six or eight careful weeks. So I do not propose to give you here any advice about training for races, etc. This, however, I will say, that if you have neglected preparation, yet wish to race and to proceed as best you may, for goodness' sake do not start on trying to make up for lost time by cramming a month's work into a few hours. Far better, if your time for training is limited, just to do the same amount of practice as you would with weeks before you. This, I know, is worth mentioning, because I have often seen fellows, fired with late and sudden energy, systematically work themselves to rags every day of the week immediately preceding the sports. Useless, that. Whatever your past, whether you have trained or not trained, make quite sure that on the day of your race you turn out perfectly fresh. Trained or untrained, a man fresh is twice as good as a man jaded. And just a hint: if you want to get as fit as possible in some idiotically short time, do it by walking; four miles top speed per diem, every day except the day before you race, on which an easy stroll is preferable. The more I see of training, the more I believe in walking as the basis of all the grinding part of it. Walking does not exhaust, and it braces without stiffening. Try it!

How to race then? How to make the best of what you are in your shoes? That is our point. And, first of all, I won't advise you not

to be nervous. It is no use; you are dead sure to be nervous in a greater or less degree, according to fitness and temperament. There never was a man, I fancy, who did not feel at least a bit anxious before a contest in which his heart was set on success. This sort of anxiety simply goes with keenness to succeed. On the whole, I would rather see a man anxious than not; the "not" may mean absence of keenness, and that is a bad sign. Still, you must try, however nervous you are, to prevent your nervousness spoiling your efforts. And the best tip to counteract nervousness is to think outwards and not inwards; don't think of yourself, but of the task before you.

Now as to tactics. In short races which are run full speed all the way, there is nothing to think of but running your fastest all the way — which includes starting as fast as you can. But this simple matter is not so very simple. First as to starting: Whether you have or have not taken the trouble to master the art of standing steady and getting away without hang or backward jerk, be assured that you are bound to start slowly unless, as you toe the mark, you fill yourself with the one fixed, all-absorbing idea of getting away from it. If you let any vague, meandering thoughts get into you as you stand there, you will be in danger of making some fatal error. Just pin yourself down to the single determination of springing away with—with, mind you, not after—the bang of the pistol. Make up your mind you are held in leash by an invisible string, which the pistol flash will surely cut asunder. Torture your body into harmony with this imagination—then, with luck, you may start quickly—as quickly, in fact, as your posture on the mark admits.

HOW TO START

(Photographed specially for THE CAPTAIN *by Geo. Newnes, Ltd.)*

I should not advise you to change your posture unless you happen to have plenty of time to master a new one. I have known fellows discuss whether they should try this or that new fad—discuss this, I'll trouble you, at lunch an hour or so before the final heat. But here is the position from which personally I found movement was smartest, helped by a good loud bang of black powder. Left foot on mark flat, cutting mark at angle of 45degs.; whole weight thrown on this foot; left knee pushed forward as far as it will go without raising heel; body thrown forward as far as possible over left knee, with left arm stretched out eagerly towards the winning post. Right leg bent like a bent spring, pressing toes of right foot against the ground about 2ft. behind instep of front foot. Keep steady by forcing left heel down, thus counteracting forward strain of body, a strain which, nevertheless, should be intense. At the bang, simply release your left heel; then your left foot automatically makes a little 6in. dab forward, and you are off. Note that the right leg should press the ground with no body weight whatever, only with its own muscular extension. It sounds funny — but — it works.

Once started, you must concentrate your whole being upon reaching the winning post. Run every inch of the way from the first stride with every ounce squeezed out. Let nothing cross your mind during the race; screw yourself on to the idea of getting to the other end. This concentration is not easy; it needs a most determined effort of will. Full pace is evoked only by intense effort. If your will flags your pace flags. I need hardly say that to look round or turn the head during a sprint is the same as giving away a yard or two. But you should carefully avoid a very common error, that of drawing up before you reach the tape. Don't think of beginning to slacken till you are at least 5yds. past the winning post. Heaps of races are lost on the tape through the man with a few inches lead slackening in the last couple of yards. Remember that even if a man is running level with you.

you do not see him. Always, therefore, finish out, clean out, and all out. And, by the way, in sprinting, lean your body well forward and keep your chin tucked in near your chest. The moment you throw your head back, back goes your body, you begin pumping up and down with your arms, and your stride exhausts part of itself in high stepping. Sprinters should be daisy-clippers. That backward chuck of the head is horrid; an American trainer would whip you for it. It is—really it is—a self-inflicted bearing-rein. Run as fast as you can all the way. How simple it reads! and what a deal it means. I'll guarantee that not one young runner in ten can run as fast as he can. Why? Because he has not mastered the power of will to screw his available pace out of himself over 100yds. Put that in your pi—no, I mean take that to heart, and you will have learnt one great secret of successful sprinting.

Now for races which are not run full pace all the way. For boys I include the quarter mile among these, and, of course, all longer distances.

The quarter mile is a peculiar race. Most authorities call it a sprint. So it is: sprinters win it. But some of the very best quarter-milers have been third-raters at 100yds. However, what usually happens in school quarters is this: There are one or more of the middle distance runners—half-milers or milers—who can run fast enough to make a decent time in the quarter because they can run the whole distance without flagging from their highest pace; then there are one or more sprinters who can run part of it at a much higher speed, but cannot last the distance at their best speed. The tactics of the middle distance man are simple. He must, of course, lay his legs to the ground as fast as he can from start to finish; therein is his only chance. But the sprinter has a nice problem. Is he to hang on the stayer till within reach of home and then spurt? Or is he to use his speed to gain an initial lead?

Now it may be that if he keeps his speed for a final spurt he finds he has dissipated already his power of spurting. I have seen many races of this sort, and I am inclined to think that the sprinter does best by treating the race as a sprint right through, even to the extent of running himself off his legs; he must then trust to his legs and his pluck just to see him home. But some authorities advocate the following stratagem. You run the first 200yds. or so at top speed, thus establishing a good lead over your staying rival; then you ease yourself over the next 100yds. or so, husbanding your powers while the stayer works up to you; when he reaches you you urge forward just a trifle to prevent his passing you, and directly he really challenges you, you put on full steam again, and try to last home. This is all right so long as there is not another sprinter on the carpet about as good as yourself. If such an one is there, you must be very careful that in easing up you do not allow him to get so far ahead that you cannot catch him. Remember, a lead of a couple of yards is a terrible lead to cut down in the last 40yds. of a quarter. Also bear in mind that it is a nice point how much to reduce your speed over the middle part of the race so as to secure the maximum of relief with the minimum sacrifice of lead. It is necessary to learn to know what is your full speed when you are, so to speak, running just within yourself.

When we come to races of half a mile and over, then tactics and judgment play a really big part. It is a fundamental principle of middle and long distance races that the runner must know his own running over the whole distance, for whether he aims at a waiting race or tries to run his at a uniform pace right through, it is equally necessary for him to be sure of the pace that gives him the best total result. In the case of the man whose strength lies in a great increase of cutting down pace over, say, the last lap, it is necessary that he know the exact pace which he can maintain over the rest of the race without knocking his quickening power out of himself; for if he runs above that normal pace he spoils his strong point, while if he runs below it he risks being left too far behind for his spurt to avail him. Of course, the man with the spurting finish likes the race to be run as slow as possible, but he is sure to be pitted against one or more competitors whose forte lies in pure staying power, and who, therefore, are sure to make the pace all the way as hot as they can without sacrificing their power of staying. They, too, in order to get their best result, must know their uniform pace. So all middle and long distance runners, during their training, ought to discover the pace that suits them, learn it by heart, and endeavour to inveigle the actual race into that pace. Each runner in the race, on the other hand, must try to avoid being forced by his rivals into a pace that does not suit him. In short, runners of these distances must make a careful study both of themselves and of their adversaries, and use their judgment in racing. It needs a fair amount of self-reliance not to allow one's judgment to be undermined by the sudden contingencies of actual racing, for one is never quite sure of not being bluffed by an adversary. Nothing but experience, fortified by Mother Wit, will give a runner the sort of judgment

that makes the worse runner prove the better in a race.

It is useful to remember that when a man wants to pass you, you can always put him to extra effort by making him race you to gain his point; you have the inside berth, and he must pass you on the outside, therefore you need not run quite as fast in order to stave him off as he must in order to pass you. Also, it is an old adage that if you want to pass a man, it pays to pass him with a bit of a rush rather than by degrees, for thus you are more likely to take him unawares, more likely to bluff him into not fighting you for the lead, and also more likely to dishearten him. Another time-honoured, but none the less valuable, hint is not to give up when pressed just because you feel "done"; persist at least for some 20yds. further in order to discover whether, as is quite likely, the man who is pressing you is not even more done than yourself.

— C. B. Fry.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. Toole.—The rule about the penalty bully at hockey seems to me to state precisely that all the players except the two engaged must be outside the striking circle. There is no exception added in favour of the goal-keeper, so I suppose the goal-keeper, unless selected by his side to participate in the bully, must foregather outside with the rest of his friends and foes. I have, however, never seen a penalty bully taken, so cannot say whether, by unwritten law, the goal-keeper is allowed to stay in his goal. I hope the penalty bully is a more sensible affair than the penalty kick in association football. Under that rule, if your adversary offends you, but you nevertheless score a goal, you must give up your gotten goal, and have another try to get one. How is that for sport? **E. Dudley.**—The school record for the mile I do not know, but I know that 4mins. 30 odd secs. is supposed to have been done at Eton. Comparative school records are valueless; the conditions, and often the distances—the same distances—vary so much. But your time, 4mins. 48⅕secs., is good, especially if run on grass. I know of no method of increasing weight; most people are on the other tack. If I were you, I'd let my weight take care of itself. I dare say it will overtake your stature all in good time. **C. J. Brewer.**—K. S. Ranjitsinhji is about 5ft. 9ins.; C. B. Fry is 5ft. 10½ins. **P. R. Fulton.**—My dear sir, don't, please, apologise for distance. The farther THE CAPTAIN goes, the better we like it. Besides, we value our colonial friends. You say you have been up and down with your leg-break bowling. That is quite common. Leg-break bowlers seem particularly subject to sudden loss of form. Vine, of Sussex, lost his leg-break power for several years, but now, on his day, he is about the most difficult bowler in England on a fast wicket. You will get your length and break again, but avoid trying to put too much break on—a couple of inches or so is good enough. Your clubs should get a good man for the "screw" you mention. Good luck to your wicket! **Zummerzet.**—You say you find you often get bowled by straight, fast half-volleys, and that when you hit them you fail to keep the ball down. Now that is curious, because your getting bowled indicates that you are late with your stroke, while your failing to keep the ball down indicates you are too soon with it. When playing a fast bowler be sure to lift your bat back almost before the ball is out of his hand, and try to time the ball so precisely that it travels all along the floor. Most batsmen are late on fast bowling, because they are taking the bat back at the time they should be bringing it down to meet the ball. If you are as keen on cricket as you say, get a pal to throw half-volleys at you at the nets; practice is what you want. **Enquirer.**—For cricket photographs, Hawkins, Preston Street, Brighton; for athletic ditto, try Stearn, Bridge Street, Cambridge. **W. M. Wace.**—(1) If a wide is bowled and goes for byes, as many wides are scored as runs are run. (2) I always try to play right back—as far back as I can—to a ball that pitches on the blind spot; but I do not believe there is such a thing as a blind spot if one judges the ball correctly. Half-cock strokes are not bad for fast bowling. (3) It is impossible to say exactly what distance from the batsman is good length for slow medium bowling. Try to bowl so that the batsman plays forward, yet do not pitch the ball far enough up for him to be able to smother it at the pitch. (4) I cannot tell you how to make a ball hang in the air, but by holding the ball dodgily you can cause it to leave your hand with less momentum than would be expected from the pace you bring your arm over. I hope you'll do well at Haileybury. **A. B. C.** wants to know about his shooting at goal. He used to be a good shot; that is, he could shoot better than he could do anything else. But this season, though he has improved in his passing and in other respects, he has lost his pristine skill in shooting. And though he practises diligently, and often in practice satisfies himself, yet in matches he cannot shoot straight for the life of him. What is he to do? My idea is that "A. B. C." looks at the ball in practice, but looks at the goal in a match. A forward in a match should know by instinct where the goal is, or find out where it is by a quick glance, but, while actually engaged in kicking the ball, he should keep his eyes firmly fixed on the ball. I have often noticed that footballers, when practising shooting at goal, do not trouble to arrange that the ball shall come to them as it would in a match. Moreover, they do not seem to understand the importance of letting fly at once. You see, in a match a forward cannot always arrange the ball conveniently and take his time; hence it is necessary to practise shooting on lines resembling match play. Excellent practice in shooting and in all sorts of kicking may be obtained in a yard or on a lawn with a small ball (a common indiarubber ball is best). I have a theory that by wearing light shoes—sand shoes, for instance—one gains an intimate "feel" of the ball and learns accuracy.

C. B. F.

(Other answers will be found on page 485.)

A TIGHT CORNER.

A Story of the Indian Frontier.

By F. P. Gibbon. Illustrated by George Soper.

I.

"I WONDER what the beggars are after?" Second-Lieutenant Fred Dalby, of the "Royal Oaks," murmured to himself.

He was strolling aimlessly through the bazaar of Hurdipore, a turbulent city not far from the north-west frontier of India. The narrow streets, with their open shops and groups of idlers, were picturesque but unspeakably filthy, and the young Englishman picked his way gingerly between the stalls of sweetmeat and fruit-sellers, jewellers, money-changers, and the vendors of curious pipes and hookahs, listening occasionally to the blandishments of the white-robed shopkeepers, who thrust their wares before him. In broken English they would offer him curious articles of native jewellery at not less than twenty times their real value, plaintively protesting their readiness to starve rather than disoblige the sahib.

Fred Dalby had been in India but a week or two, and was "an officer and a gentleman"-of a few months' standing only. His appearance and expression were particularly boyish, and few people would have taken him for more than sixteen years of age. The men of the "Royal Oaks" had quickly nicknamed him "the Infant," and his heart's desire—second to the hope of distinguishing himself and rising rapidly in the service of his monarch—was that his moustache would become visible at a greater distance than a couple of feet.

A HAIRY PATHAN MADE AN INSULTING JEST AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ENGLISH BOY.

Wandering from stall to stall, he noticed, with some alarm, the suspicious behaviour of two Sepoys, who were apparently following him at a respectful distance. They never came close to him, but though he turned corners sharply and made several attempts to throw his shadowers off he would soon catch sight of them again, intently

watching him, and he fancied a malevolent expression on their by no means prepossessing features.

They were Gurkhas he felt sure, because of their small stature, and from the fact that a Gurkha battalion was stationed close to his own, and he had noted their distinctive, dark green uniforms and round caps, so different from the costume of other Sepoys. One of their officers, Lieutenant Brandon, had been at the same school, having left for Sandhurst whilst Fred was still in the Fifth Form. That very morning Fred had paid a visit to his old schoolfellow, and these two had evidently followed him from their camp, with what fell intent he could only guess.

Around the stalls lounged groups composed of men of various tribes and races, some being steady Punjabis, sturdy Jat peasants, and timid Bengali money-grubbers. Others, however, were big, warlike fellows from the north and west, whose truculent faces and open scowls and mutterings in an unknown tongue did not tend to reassure him. A hairy Pathan in one of these groups made a rough, insulting jest at the expense of the English boy, and spat after him as he passed, and the cackle of laughter that followed caused the young officer's ears to tingle, though he could not understand the remark. His skipper, Captain Longnor, had cautioned him against going alone into the bazaar, for Hurdipore always contained a rough element, and at the present time there were rumours of coming risings of the fanatical Mohammedan tribes of the frontier. A spirit of unrest was abroad, and hatred of the white *kafirs* seemed general amongst the fierce fanatics.

A moment later he turned, and, looking back at the group, beheld the two Gurkha Sepoys talking earnestly to the Pathan who had insulted him. They grinned at him and tapped the kukri-knives in the scabbards on their right hips—for they carried no rifles in the town—and Dalby guessed what that gesture meant. For one moment he wondered what to do, and was on the point of deciding to slip away as quickly as he could. He had already purchased the two or three curiosities he wanted to send home, and there was no further reason for staying.

But his pride rejected the plan in time. He turned, and with deliberate pace retraced his steps past the group and, drawing himself up, looked the men in the face as he passed. The Gurkhas saluted and the Pathans said not a word, and before long he was breathing freely again, outside the confined streets. Dalby saw no more of the two Gurkhas that day, but he was destined to meet them again. His friend Brandon was amused when he heard his story.

"I wonder who the two little asses were!" he laughingly observed. "They must have taken a fancy to you, Dalby, to go to so much trouble on your account."

"What do you mean by 'trouble on my account'?" Fred asked.

"Why, they saw you were rather green and needed someone to look after you. Hurdipore bazaar is a bit dangerous just now for an inexperienced Englishman, and they knew it."

"Do you mean to say, Brandon, that you imagine those two chaps were following in order to protect me? I don't."

"I haven't the slightest shadow of doubt, Dalby, that they were very disappointed that there was no row and that you were not attacked."

"I daresay they were," our young friend retorted. "They'd have joined in it too."

"They would," the Gurkha officer laughed, "and those Pathans knew it, fortunately for you, perhaps."

A few weeks later the "Royal Oaks" were in the thick of the fighting, for the Afridis had indeed risen. Hardly had the troops left Shinawari, the advanced base, when the fighting commenced. The Dargai and Chagru Kotal hills were taken, almost without opposition, by General Kempster's brigade. But again someone had blundered, and, for reasons not generally understood, it was decided to retire, the result being that before many days had passed the heights of Dargai had again to be stormed.

On this second occasion every advantage lay with the enemy, and our loss was terrible. Most of you know the story of the Gurkhas' and Gordons' pluck on that memorable day.

Now these retirements form the Pathan's opportunity. The Afridis and other mountain tribes will allow themselves to be pushed from hill to hill, retreating continually until they have drawn our troops away from their supports and their supplies. The trackless hills and valleys are too steep and rough to admit the passage of transport carts or animals, and so the troops are forced to fall back before their food and ammunition give out. Then the watchful enemy come swarming round, potting at them from the surrounding heights, and sparing no effort to cut off all stragglers.

Highlanders, English, Sikhs, Punjabis, and Gurkhas all bore themselves with splendid gallantry and steadiness during this difficult retirement, though the Afridi marksmen were good. A small body of Gurkha scouts—picked shots and climbers from the various Gurkha battalions—were crowning the heights and driving back the Pathans whenever these became too daring.

The "Royal Oaks" had relieved the Sikh regiment that had formed the rearguard for a

part of the day, supporting the scouts when necessary.

"Seems a tight place, this," Fred Dalby remarked to his skipper, as their men spread out amongst the boulders, for Longnor's company was the last of the battalion, and the hardest work was falling to its share.

"Not so bad, youngster," Captain Longnor cheerfully replied. "Don't waste your cartridges like that," he called sharply to a Tommy who was firing rather wildly at nothing in particular.

"By Jove, look there!" Dalby suddenly exclaimed.

He pointed towards a bare, sloping shoulder of the mountain, nearly a thousand yards away. The last of the scouts were traversing this exposed place, having held the heights commanding the summit of the pass long enough to enable the rest of the force to get a good way down in comparative safety. But by now the Pathans had come up in force, and this bare slope being destitute of sheltering rocks a cross-fire from two sides began to sweep it. With the tail-end of the scouts was an ammunition mule. By some means or other they had managed to help it over the most difficult ground, and on this mule the Afridi rifles concentrated their attention, hoping to tumble it down the hillside towards them, for the prospect of so great a supply of ammunition filled their fierce hearts with joy.

"They've all reached cover except the mule and his driver," Captain Longnor exclaimed, as he gazed through his glasses. "What wonderful beggars those Gurkhas are. They seem to find good shelter behind a blade of grass."

"It seems like it," said Dalby. "If our 'Royal Oaks' had had to cross that place under such a fire they'd all have been hit."

"Englishmen, somehow, don't seem able to take advantage of cover properly," his skipper replied. "I'm afraid the Pathans are bound to get that ammunition though."

"Look, the driver's killed!" Fred cried. "By Jove, but that's a brave man!"

One of the scouts had rushed from behind his boulder as the driver fell, resolved that the enemy should not have the cartridges if he could help it. The bullets whistled round and above him, one cutting the sling of his rifle, a second entering his arm, others striking the boxes and the mule's equipment, the mule itself, fortunately, receiving only a slight wound. But though the dust was raised in little spurts all round him, the Gurkha calmly led the animal through it all into a place of safety, amidst the cheerful howls of derision raised by his comrades.*

"That chap deserves the Victoria Cross," was Captain Longnor's admiring comment.

"Oughtn't we to go and help them down?" Dalby asked. "They seem to be in a pretty tight place."

Before the captain could reply an order was signalled from half a mile away down the pass instructing Longnor's company to support the scouts. Fifty men under Grey, the senior subaltern, were sent up the hill to the right, the remaining thirty, who were picked men, ascending to the left under Longnor and Dalby—for this appeared the more dangerous task. The assailants seemed less numerous on this side, but the conformation of the ground exposed the Englishmen to greater risks from the Pathan marksmen.

II.

"THE BIGGER the body of men I take up there," Captain Longnor argued to himself, "the easier target they'll make. I'll have none but experienced fellows, who know how to take cover."

The mistakes he made were two in number, for neither of which could he reasonably be blamed. As it happened, the enemy were coming up in far greater force on this side of the pass than on the other, though, as yet, their numbers were not within sight or range. Secondly, the scouts were not in such difficulties as he had imagined, and when the thirty had toiled up the steep hillside and reached the ridge where they had expected to find their allies fighting for their lives, hardly a Gurkha remained within sight. They had passed swiftly along the ridge beyond this point, for as soon as they and their mule had reached cover, the Pathans had kept at a respectful distance, for they regard with the most wholesome dread the unerring rifles and keen kukris of the little men in dark green. Longnor and his handful found themselves practically in a trap. Only half a dozen scouts could be seen stalking one or two more venturesome Afridis. But, though as yet unnoticed, the enemy were close at hand. With savage glee they had marked the blundering infidels toiling in the wrong direction, and had passed the word to lie low.

"We're in a beastly hole, I'm afraid, Dalby," the skipper whispered. "I've led them wrong. We must follow those Gurkhas and stick to them."

As he spoke, a rattle of musketry broke out in front and to the left of them. Except the semicircle of smoke, nothing was visible.

"Down with you, lads!" Longnor cried. "Don't waste a shot."

"But look there, Longnor," Fred whispered,

* An actual occurrence.—Ed. Captain.

pointing towards some perpendicular rocks a little way behind them and higher up. "There's a sangar."

"Good, that's the place! This way, men, and we'll win through yet."

A sangar is a stone breastwork, and the Tirah mountains are dotted with them. Though partially destroyed, this one was well situated, being built round the base of the rock that guarded their rear. In a few moments, what was left of the thirty—for five had been killed and seven wounded — were piling fresh boulders where the wall was broken down, while the bullets came pattering against their shelter, and the stone splinters flew around. The Afridis' fire, though well aimed, was irregular, five minutes sometimes passing without a sign from the foe. After one such period of waiting, a man rose to his knees and peered over the breastwork, evidently believing that the enemy had disappeared.

"DUCK, YOU IDIOT!" LONGNOR ANGRILY SHOUTED.

"Duck, you idiot!" Longnor angrily shouted, and the man obeyed, for a bullet had entered his forehead the instant it appeared above the shelter. In the attempt to save the soldier from his own rashness, the captain momentarily exposed himself, and he dropped at Dalby's feet, shot through the heart. The Pathans had found the range, sure enough.

Our young lieutenant felt faint as he examined the body of his friend and captain, and found that he was dead. But this was no time for sentiment, for upon him the responsibility now rested. Was there anything he could do to save them? No, he gave it up as hopeless; they were surely doomed, for it seemed that their peril had not been noticed.

Suddenly a young private, who was looking between the gaps, where the breastwork joined the rock, gesticulated wildly. Fred and the sergeant crawled towards him.

"They've crept to the rear," he whispered, his voice quivering with excitement. "Seen two of 'em 'mongst the boulders. Look!"

A dark form was wriggling, snake-like, over the rough ground, the least bit only being visible. Harding raised his rifle swiftly, and the vicious hiss of the Lee-Metford broke the momentary silence.

"Missed!" muttered the sergeant. "He ducked. Well, I'm jiggered!—what's that?"

The broad blade of a kukri was raised above the stone behind which the man lay, and gradually lowered. Fred promptly grasped the meaning of the sign.

"Don't fire! They're scouts! Keep the Pathans busy for a moment."

He was obeyed, and, under cover of the fire, the Gurkhas wormed their way inside, one by one.

"Only seven?" Fred asked, in disappointed tones, as the last crept through. He had hoped for a full company.

To his surprise, he recognised the two who had followed him through the Hardipore bazaar. Seeing the young lieutenant they grinned a genial and approving grin, and he understood, at last, how he had misjudged them. These seven had lingered to get a last pot or two at the more

daring Afridis, and, seeing the danger to their British comrades, had left a place of safety to lend a hand, though death stared them in the face. One of Fred's friends wore a corporal's stripes, and was evidently in command of the party. He raised his round cap, with its badge of crossed kukris, on the muzzle of his Martini, and as the pre-historic dodge drew the Pathans' fire, the little men chuckled merrily.

"Those chaps seem to think they're taking part in a bloomin' picnic," muttered one of the Royal Oaks. But, after a few shots, the Afridis would no longer rise to the bait. Amar Sing Gurung, the *naik*, or corporal, proceeded to commandeer the Lee-Metfords of the dead soldiers, examining them critically and grunting approval. Though none of the native troops had as yet been given the magazine rifle, Amar Sing and one or two others knew its little ways, and began to make use of it.

"Our Gurky friends ain't firing overmuch," Sergeant Harding presently observed, "but I'm jiggered if they don't bring their man down every time!"

"'Ello, there's one of 'em 'it, though—and Perkins as well. Through the head, poor chap."

An English private and a Gurkha, lying side by side, had been struck by successive shots, the Pathans having found a spot whence they could command a corner of the sangar. To British eyes the enemy were practically invisible, but the keen-eyed little Nepalese soon discovered the marksmen, and kept down their fire. In spite of all their efforts, however, this corner of their fortress soon became too hot. In rapid succession two more of the Royal Oaks were wounded, and then a bullet struck Fred Dalby's thigh. At once Amar Sing rose and lay on the left of the British boy—because the bullets were coming from the left—shielding him with his body until he could be assisted from the dangerous spot.

"Cease firing there!" called out the prostrate sergeant. "'Ere's an 'airy beggar with a white rag!"

The speaker turned towards his officer as a Pathan approached, waving a flag of truce.

"Shall we 'ear what 'e 'as to say, sir?"

"Certainly," Dalby replied. "Can any of you fellows speak Pushtu?"

The men shook their heads, for a knowledge of the vernacular is not one of Tommy's usual accomplishments, though he is very proud of the few pet words of which he has managed to take hold. A young private pointed towards one of their dead comrades and said:—

"Perkins there could, sir, but he's gone."

"What's the good of tellin' us that, you numskull?" the sergeant wrathfully demanded. Then he added, "'Ello, the ambassador chap's jawin' to the Gurkhies."

Amar Sing Gurung turned excitedly to the British officer, and, in broken English, made a request.

"Sahib, may I shoot this dog? The fool is trying to tempt us, saying they will allow us Gurkhas to leave this place and rejoin our comrades, so that you English may be more easy victims. Give me leave to shoot him."

"He is under the protection of the flag of truce. You must not touch him."

"But the white flag should not be a cloak for treachery, sahib," the little man persisted.

"Nevertheless, he must not be shot."

"I say, Harding," Fred whispered to the war-experienced sergeant, "the Pathans have offered to let the Gurkhas go free on condition that they leave us to our fate."

"That's a Pathan all over, sir."

"Well, sergeant, I'm afraid it's only a matter of another half hour or so for all of us, so don't you think we ought to give the Gurkhas the chance? Their remaining here will only give us a little longer respite; it can't save us."

"Five minutes might mean a lot, sir, if rescue should come five minutes too late. Whether they go or not, we'll 'old on for every minute we can; but they didn't ought to leave us, bein' soldiers same as us."

"We've not been noticed, so there's little chance of rescue," Fred argued. "They came to help save us because we'd made a mistake, and we've no right to condemn them to death when there's a chance of their saving themselves to fight again."

"You're in command, sir," the sergeant replied—and the Pathan waited patiently for his reply—"but what I should like to know is, why the bloomin' Afridis are so dashed anxious to get rid of the Johnnies, unless they think there's a chance of rescue if we hold out long enough. Answer me that, sir!"

"Because the Gurkhas' shooting is so good that they're losing too many men. They'd prefer to kill us Englishmen without much loss, rather than slaughter the lot and lose heavily themselves."

"Very good, sir, give 'em the chanst. I've fought shoulder to shoulder with Johnny before to-day, and if 'e's willin' to leave us in this 'ere 'ole—well, I'm dashed!"

Our boy officer thereupon informed Amar Sing that, as there seemed no chance of rescue, he and his comrades might take advantage of the Pathan's terms. The *naik* stared at him until his almond eyes became mere slits, then, cackling with amusement, translated this offer for the

benefit of his countrymen, who broke into fits of laughter.

The Pathan looked on in amazement.

"You have insulted us," Amar Sing began. "What would Brandon Sahib think of us if we left you? What would you Englishmen do in our place? You would remain to die with your comrades—and Gurkhas are as good soldiers as Englishmen. We are as proud of our regiment as you are of yours, and there's not a man here but would rather die than disgrace it."

As he concluded, one of the Gurkha rifles rang out, breaking the long silence—and then a second and a third. Under cover of the flag of truce the enemy were drawing closer in to this hornets' nest of a sangar, creeping warily from boulder to boulder. Amar Sing Gurung cried out to the envoy:—

"Run, traitor, for I fire when I've counted ten!" and the Pathan vanished.

Once again the familiar fusillade rattled about their ears, and the lead whistled overhead and thudded against the stone breastwork.

III.

MEANWHILE the main body, lower down the valley, had more than held their own, and the leading regiments had already reached a spot where the column might camp for the night in comparative safety. On the opposite mountain tops Grey's half company of the Royal Oaks, with that portion of the scout corps which we may call the right wing, had dispersed the Pathans with heavy loss. Rejoining his regiment, Lieutenant Grey reported to the colonel that Longnor and the others were with the scouts' left wing, so no one suspected their danger.

Luckily, however, Lieutenant Brandon had awakened to the fact that *Naik* Amar Sing Gurung's section had not rejoined. He lost no time in wondering what to do. Calling his men of the left wing together, he signalled across the valley to his comrades on the opposite hill-side that a section had been cut off somewhere towards the head of the Pass. His signal was promptly answered by the right wing, and, opening out again, the hundred fighting men under his command began to retrace their steps, and Brandon knew, though he could not see them, that another two hundred were swiftly moving towards the same goal to take the Afridis in the flank. These scouts had been at it hammer and tongs from dawn till dusk, fighting and climbing one steep mountain after another. Tired though they were—though they knew that their comrades below were preparing the evening meal—there was not a grumble from the cheery little men. In less than half an hour the sound of firing attracted their attention, and put new life into them. With that call to arms ringing in their ears, British officers and Gurkha riflemen forgot their weariness, and advanced at the double in extended order along the heights.

Of the little band who were facing death with their backs to the rocks only five remained unwounded—Amar Sing, another Gurkha, and three British privates. The Afridis had made one misguided attempt to rush the post, and had been hurled back with heavy loss, the bayonets of the Royal Oaks and the kukris of Amar Sing's merry men having played about them. They also, however, had inflicted loss and reduced the garrison.

"Why don't the beggars make another rush and finish it one way or another?" Sergeant Harding growled. "It 'ud be better than dying 'ere without catching sight of their ugly mugs."

Harding had been struck in the left hand, but he could still fight.

"Aye," muttered another wounded Tommy, "I should just like another chanst at 'em with the bayonet. I've enough strength left for that."

Fred Dalby was feeling sick and faint through pain and exhaustion, but with the pluck of a British school-boy, or British officer—for it is much the same—he again and again rallied the men with some appearance of heartiness. They had nicknamed him "the Infant" a few weeks ago, and, if they lived, would continue to call him so. He had been tried by fire, however, and had not been found wanting, and for the remainder of their days those men would be ready to follow whithersoever he might choose to lead them.

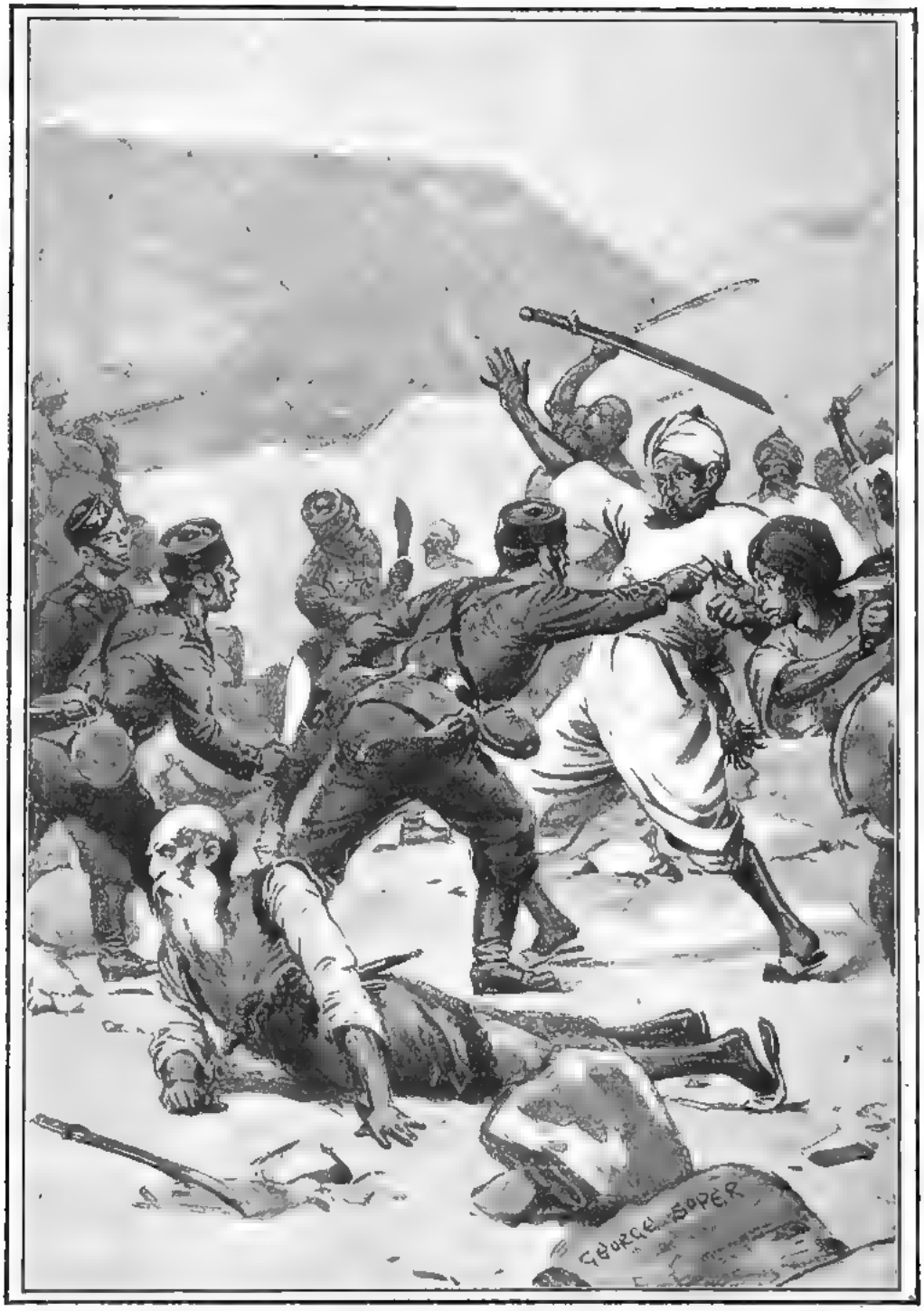
But there seemed little prospect of any of that handful leading, or being led again. The noise of fighting behind them had died away, and what could this mean except that their comrades had reached a place of safety, and had never noticed their absence? Sullenly and doggedly they waited, and wondered when the end would come.

As if to settle the question, the reports suddenly redoubled.

"By George," muttered the sergeant, "now we shan't be long! They've worked round and got us like rats in a trap. Let's have at 'em with the bayonet, and die fighting, sir."

"How is it the bullets are not hitting the breastwork, or whizzing overhead, though?" Fred cried in excited tones.

Amar Sing sprang to his feet and peered over the sangar. Quickly ducking again he began to chatter to his comrades, and in an instant they were firing through the gaps with redoubled energy.



IT WAS BIG, BRAWNY MAN SLICING WITH LONG STRAIGHT KNIFE AT LITTLE STURDY MAN WITH HALF-MOON BLADE.

"Our comrades have crept up behind us," he gleefully sang out.

"Peg away, men!" Fred cried. "The Pathans have their hands full."

Brisker and brisker became the firing, and our beleaguered friends could see a long curve of smoke spurts behind their sangar, and knew that each spurt marked the cover of a scout. Creeping forward with great cunning, the rescuers dealt out death as they came, for not even a Boer can excel a Gurkha scout on the hills at the game of shooting straight whilst keeping unseen.

The thought that the prey, on whose destruction they had confidently reckoned, and who had caused such heavy loss, might yet escape their clutches, maddened the fanatics. They still greatly outnumbered the infidels, and a *mullah*, or priest, who for some time had been urging them to storm the sangar, now rose up, and in a violent harangue worked his hearers into a frenzy. Though half a dozen rifles were levelled at him, the bullets flew wide, and the *mullah* took advantage of this by declaring that Allah had made him invulnerable. "Follow me!" he cried. "Paradise awaits us!"

In the fury of religious mania, three score Pathans turned Ghazis—that is, fanatics who swear to die fighting—and these charged down upon the sangar, a terror-striking mob. Behind them came another hundred less determined men. Fred Dalby had painfully raised himself to look over the wall, and saw the new move as soon as any.

"Quick, men!" he cried. "Use your magazines. Every man who can stir a finger must fight now, or all our throats are cut."

And every man answered the call, but in the excitement the aiming was too wild to stay a Ghazi rush. The nearest scouts were seventy yards away, a group nearly thirty strong. Firing a couple of volleys, these dashed forward to meet the Ghazis. The shock came at the sangar wall, and it was big, brawny man slicing with long, straight knife at little, sturdy man with short, half-moon blade. But the Gurkha's skill with the kukri is something to wonder at, and can hardly be realised. No Pathan except a Ghazi will stand up to it. A dozen broke through, however, and scrambled over the breastwork, the rest being kept back and having to fight hard to hold their own. Harding shot the first and bayoneted the next; Amar Sing took the third, and two more fell to Fred's revolver. In the excitement men forgot their wounds, and not one of those twelve madmen left the deadly enclosure.

Amar Sing Gurung was first over the wall to the aid of his comrades. How Fred scrambled over he could not tell, but he followed, and with eight others reinforced the scouts outside. By now the hundred backers of the Ghazis were close at hand, but closer still were Brandon and twenty of his men.

Suddenly distant Pushtu shouts were heard, and the greater part of the force following up the Ghazi rush began to slink away. The shouts warned them of the flanking movement of the scouts from the opposite ridge; and though the Pathan will fight gamely while he has a way of escape to serve at the last pinch, threaten his retreat and his heart fails him. Brandon made straight for the thick of the mob, and attempted to close with the *mullah*, when two big Pathans barred his way. Fred tried to follow his friend, but the injured leg now reasserted itself and he fell. The *mullah* ran to the spot, a cruel gleam in his eye. Every Gurkha and Englishman was engaged hand to hand, and only Brandon saw the danger; and, unluckily, he had just emptied his revolver on his opponents. Sword in hand, he sprang after the priest, for he now recognised the boyish face of his schoolfellow, when Fred, raising himself on one elbow, fired twice. The momentum carried the *mullah* forward, and he fell dead on the top of the boy.

Disheartened by the death of their "invulnerable" leader, the remnant of the Ghazis forgot their oath and fled, followed by the equally fierce Gurkhas, foremost among whom was Amar Sing. Brandon drew his friend from under the *mullah* and found he had fainted.

"Good heavens, sergeant!" he exclaimed, turning to Harding, "I never knew there were any of *you* here. By Jove, you have had a bad time! But we must get down sharp. Those who can walk do so—we'll carry the rest. Who's in command?"

"Captain Longnor—killed first thing, sir. Lieutenant Dalby in command since, and right down well he shaped, sir!"

"And you've held this hole for three hours against five hundred! Well done, Dalby! I'll take care that the chief knows all about it. Come along—quick!"

IF I HAD TO BE AN ANIMAL.

Being some Expressions of Opinion by Readers of "The Captain."

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A ROOK—BY AN OBSERVANT READER.

If I had to be an animal, other than a human being, I should like to be a rook. Anyone observing a rookery cannot help noticing what a splendid life these birds live.

The "route march" of a human army must be a direct imitation of the methods of a flock of rooks. When a flock come back to their rookery at night, they do not fly in an irregular pack, like starlings or wild geese, but always travel in the same definite order. First comes the "advance guard," then a "connecting file," then the main body, after that comes a second "connecting file," and finally the "rear guard." This mode of travelling must be delightful to rooks with military minds.

Other great attractions of rook life are the Parliaments and Mass Meetings held in every rookery. Any observer will testify to the fact that rooks hold great open-air meetings, at which they discuss, apparently with great warmth, which farmer's fields they shall forage in, or what tactics they shall employ in the next skirmish with their neighbours. The Parliaments held by rooks are strictly democratic, for every bird in the rookery attends, and any rook with a sufficiently loud "caw" is always sure of a prominent place in the debate.

The rook has far greater security of tenure than birds who build in hedges or on the ground. It is true that human marauders do sometimes reach a rook's nest, but it requires a large amount of pluck and skill for a small boy to climb a tall elm. The pleasure of jeering at those who tumble down when they are half-way up, must fully compensate any sportsmanlike rook for an occasional loss of eggs.

One great drawback to a rook's life is the annual shoot held by farmers. Even then, however, a rook is in a better position than a partridge or a rabbit, for if he has sufficient sense to sit still in his nest, the farmers cannot very well send a dog or a beater to turn him out.

CYRIL BURRAGE.

THE JOYS OF FROG LIFE APPEAL TO A BOY OF NINE.

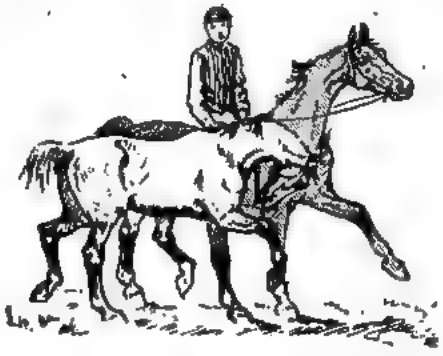
I think I should like to be a frog best, because it would be so nice to be able to swim, and dive, and to hop about in the grass by the pond or stream where I lived. Then in warm days I could lie and bask in the sun, and when I got too hot I could go for a swim in the water, or dive off the bank. Of course there would be the winter, when it is cold; and I couldn't swim, and I should feel cold. But the winter is not always cold, and frogs like it when it is rainy. Again, even if I could not swim, I could hop about. It would be rather good fun catching my dinner, which would consist of a lot of flies, water-insects, and things like that, or else worms, and when I could not get these, different kinds of water-weed. Sometimes frogs are caught and put in the strawberry beds to eat slugs and other things which eat the strawberries. But frogs like slugs, and there would sure to be a good many there, or I should not have been put there, so that would not be so very bad. Then there would also be the ducks, who eat frogs; but then, if I lived in a stream there might not be any ducks, and if there were they might not see me, and if they did they might not catch me; so that altogether I should not be very likely to have anything very unpleasant happen to me. I would rather be a frog than

a toad, because a toad is not half so pretty, and is so slow and lazy. Of course, some day I should die, but I should most likely have lived a pretty long life first.

H. Ackerley.

SWEET SEVENTEEN WOULD PREFER TO BE A RACEHORSE!

Of all animals, I would rather be a horse than anything else. I would be one of the swiftest racehorses in the world. My reasons are, that you are treated better than ordinary horses, and fed and cared for almost like a child. Your stables are beautifully clean and airy, with two or three individuals to look after you, give you the best and most stimulating food, and keep you spotlessly clean and groomed till your coat is most beautifully glossy. You are given gentle exercise in the morning, ending up, perhaps, with a glorious gallop over some breezy down. Fleet as the wind you dash along, strong and tireless, then, still quite fresh, home and another grooming, and so to your comfortable stable. Oh! it is a racehorse's life for me! Then comes the grand *finale*, after weeks of training, watching, and ceaseless care, with a jockey's light weight on your back, someone, most probably, who knows you better than anyone else, and whom you love, you start on your great race. Round and round the course you go amid the wild cheering, for, of course, you are the favourite; inch by inch you creep up and pass your opponents. A horse and man may fall, you take no notice—everything is to get clear of those surrounding



you. It is nearly over now and only one more to pass; but one great effort more and you have won amongst a roar of cheers! And the petting you get after—for perhaps you have won a fortune for your master! Finally, when you are ill there is no neglect. You are a different creature, I might almost say "person," to other animals, who are often killed at once. Your doctor comes and attends you regularly, your food is most strengthening—eggs, bovril, etc.—and your nurses sit up with you all night. Finally comes old age. This with all animals is a lottery; you may be well cared for and tended, and you may come down in the world sadly; however, I must not write another word on the joys and sorrows of a racehorse's life, else I shall exceed my four hundred words.

Marjorie C. Copleston.

THE LIFE OF A HAWK—ITS DELIGHTS AND DANGERS.

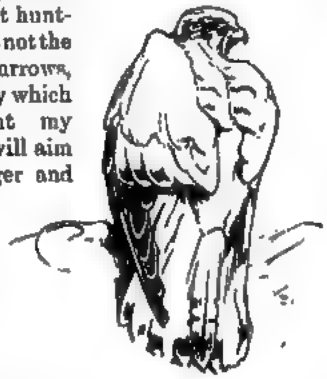
For the present I am content to belong to the *genus homo*, though I dare say there have been many occasions in my life upon which, to suit some exigency of the time, I have expressed a desire to be this or that animal, and even now, if Circe rose from her grave and told me I had to be an animal, giving me my choice, I should have no hesitation in choosing for myself the free, wild life of a hawk.

I am sitting, a ball of white fluff, with two beady eyes and a dangerous-looking beak, in the sunshine of a warm June morning. Around me I hear various chippings, crackings, and squeakings. I open my eyes wider, then crouch with a feeling of fear, which is gone immediately as an instinctive feeling of filial love creeps through me, causing me to recognise my mother, perched on the edge of our aërial home, now and then bending down to remove odd pieces of egg-shell which the entry into the world of my two sisters and single brother causes, my father all the while regarding us with paternal pride from the branch a foot or two above our nest.

Weeks pass like days as we progress from the stage of eating finely torn flesh to that of rending up for ourselves the quivering larks, linnets, sparrows, and other small birds which our kind parents never seem tired of obtaining for us.

As soon as we are old enough to understand, my father explains to us the life we are about to lead the dangers we shall meet and how to meet them, our many enemies, our food, and numerous items concerning our daily life. He then teaches us the art of flying, and not many days pass ere we have all caught our first prey.

My desire to go out "on my own" soon gets the better of me, so I leave home and parents and plan out for myself (how unnatural for a bird to plan!) a happy, selfish life of nothing but hunting and killing, but not the miserable larks, sparrows, and other small fry which seem to content my parents. No! I will aim at something larger and grander — the swift wild duck, the strong-winged heron, and the nimble hare.



Thus I sit planning on the top of a tall oak, when suddenly my attention is drawn to a small cover not far off, whence proceeds the well-known whistle of our tribe. I grow curious, then fly off to make the acquaintance of whomever it may be. I hover above the spot whence the whistle came, but see nothing. I drop lower. Still nothing but . . . a man steps out from the undergrowth, pointing up at me a piece of shining steel. There follows a loud report. My poor leg and side!

I turn tail—or rather attempt to—for there is another loud bang. My wing falls useless, my brain whirls as a charge of No. 6 shot sears hotly through my breast. I spin like a tee-to-tum, beating the air with my free wing, while my father's warnings again rush through my bewildered brain. Then I meet the ground with a crash, and—the rest is a blank!

G. T. Atkinson.

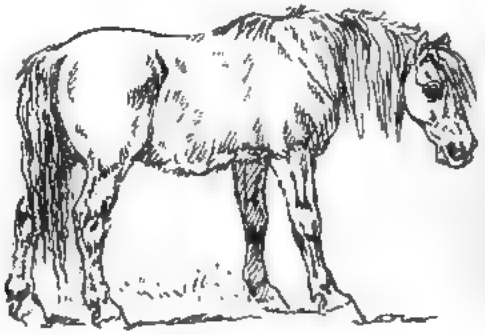
AS A SHETLAND PONY.

The animal I would prefer to be is a boy's pony, well looked after by a kind master, who would always feed me himself, and who would pet me so as to make me love him and be faithful to him. I will now assume the *rôle* of a pony in order to point out some of the advantages of being one.

I am a little Shetland pony, bought as a present for Harry, the son of Sir James Barton, as a birthday gift. I have now belonged to him for nearly a year, and not once has he spoken an angry word to me or even chastised me.

When he rises in the morning he takes me out of my stable, saddles and bridles me, and then takes me for a brisk canter over the moors. This puts new life into me, and I gallop on and on, forgetting everything until I am checked by my master pulling the reins. He pats me, turns me round, and we gallop home again. He then places me in my stall, and gives me a good rub down, after which I have my morning meal of oats. When I am well rested, he mounts me again, and rides to school, which is in the adjoining village. When we arrive at school my master puts me in the stable, provides me with plenty to eat, and there I have to stop until school is over. He then rides me home, and, arrived there, places me in my stall, brings me in some straw for a bed, and, after a few caresses and pats, leaves me for the night. This ends my ordinary day.

At times my master and other boys, who are fortunate enough to possess ponies, have races, and nearly always I prove my gratitude to him by winning, which he appreciates by giving me a lump of sugar or some other delicacy. I am always happy when I win. To show my master how



much I love him is my greatest desire, as he in turn loves me very much.

James Beahan.

THE PROS AND CONS OF DOG LIFE.

There are times when we all wish that we could suddenly be transformed into a creature of the animal world: and this is generally the case when we have a longing after irresponsibility and a consequent lack of care; but, looked at as an event of possible accomplishment, we should perhaps require a little time wherein to consider the matter.

Of course, the lives of animals are always free from that form of trouble which arises from introspection and retrospection, or, at least, we are apt to think so. One feels a little doubtful on this point at times—say, for instance, when a favourite dog proves by his actions that he is anticipating something which only a past experience could

have led him to anticipate; but then, dogs have so much more of the human soul in them than any other of the animal creation.

Their chief attribute is loyalty, a quality which proves conclusively the existence of a soul—however elementary and unindividualised. Some scientists say that the main difference between a man's soul and a dog's soul is that the one is individualised and particular, the other diffuse and general, in fact, without consciousness, which prevents their reasoning, even while they *divine*.

Then a dog has a great sense of humour; and a sense of humour is the saving clause of life. There are few possessions more to be desired; it carries one triumphantly on the crest of difficulties that would otherwise submerge; it gives a zest to life; and one cannot somehow imagine a man with an abiding sense of humour suffering from dyspepsia—but this is digression.

Dogs have their differences in temperament and worth; but loyalty and humorousness are the common property of dogs, from the tiny toy, whose appetite and ideas are alike dainty and circumscribed, to the St. Bernard, big and trusty, who *comprehends* when he does not clearly understand.

We sometimes think that animals' lives are of necessity free from trouble worth mentioning if they are well fed and housed; but we hardly realise how keenly a dog is hurt at times by a lack of sympathy or by misunderstanding; he is a sensitive beast, and the kick that does not perhaps hurt his body, hurts *him*; not by reason of the blow itself, perhaps trivial, but the feeling which prompted it.

There is no animal quicker of perception; he scents a troubled atmosphere unerringly; and his silent sympathy is the more worth having because it is spontaneous, and cannot be spoilt by words less eloquent and tender than his eyes.

But the fact that dogs possess these qualities would perhaps make one the less desirous of living their life; to possess sensitive human qualities and be denied their expression is one of those sorrows which most dogs know; but if the troubles be greater, the joys are, also; and to be a dog possessed by an understanding master must seem a desirable existence in those moments when we would like to be some four-footed creature.

TERENCE O'SHAUGHNESSY.

BY ANOTHER WHO, FAILING ABILITY TO TALK, WOULD PREFER TO BARK.

If I had to be an animal, what sort should I prefer to be? Why, a dog, of course. No doubt about *that*. And why? Well, I'll try and give you my reasons.

First, dogs are undoubtedly the most sagacious and intelligent of animals. They are quick to understand and appreciate what is said to them, and can even answer back in their own "doggy" language by a wag of the tail or a short, sharp bark. Some dogs can learn tricks more quickly than others; but if one can find a really clever dog, it can be taught almost anything, from begging to doing a sum.

Secondly, fidelity is a quality that one cannot fail to admire in man or in beast, and in dogs it is often especially marked. Their love and devotion to their masters are sometimes a lesson to us who claim to be on a higher plane than they are. There are many instances of dogs being the means of saving life by their prompt action and quick understanding of the situation. The St. Bernard and Newfoundland are good examples of this.

Thirdly, a dog is such a companionable sort of animal. A long walk by oneself is not half so lonely if one is accompanied by a faithful little terrier or a big retriever. Indeed, some people prefer the company of dogs to that of their own fellow-creatures.

Fourthly, dogs are not (at least, a majority of them) mere useless ornaments of society. They play their part with the rest of the world on that stage where all have their exits and their entrances, and their part is generally a useful one. Abroad the dogs are used to draw the milkcarts, and although we in England do not put them to this use, yet it cannot be denied that in their capacity as watchdogs they are certainly very necessary.

I have stated my reasons for preferring a dog's life to that of any other animal, but what has influenced me most in my decision is that dogs seem to me to approach the level of human nature more than any other creature by their wonderful amount of what we may call brain power or intellect.

Finally, if in a future state of existence I chance to be metamorphosed into an animal, may I become a dog!

DOROTHY OWEN.

If I had to be an animal I would be a giraffe. Why? Because then no one would say "How *tall* she grows!" "Soon be as big as her father!" or make other inane remarks. No, the taller I grew the more *fitted* I should be, and I should be looked up to in every sense of the word. *Now*, when I go out with my mother to pay calls, if the conversation flags—as it invariably does after a quarter of an hour's converse—the hostess remarks what a tall girl I get, and tells me not to do my hair on the top of my head or I shall not get through the doorway (that is a favourite witticism), and I have to smile and look as if the remarks on my abnormal height were pleasing to my flesh.

"SHE OF THE LONG NECK."

Yes, I would be a comely giraffe, with a long, long neck, and long, long legs, and a beautiful spotted body. With my flexible tongue I would twist off juicy leaves of handsome acacias, and then hie me to my mate. Off we would go, galumping across the plains with swift strides to the green groves; now trembling with fear as the tawny hide of a lion shows through the interlacing boughs, now quivering with delight at the sight of tender leafy morsels. My name would be "She of the Long Neck," and all the giraffes would gaze with awe and envy. Long would I live, but when my years were drawing to a close, and my legs began to wax feeble, and my neck to hang like a watering-hose that has sprung a leak, I would call my giraffial friends and lie down for the last time beneath a sheltering palm. For the last time would I partake of fragrant dainties picked by sympathising companions; then I would lay my neck slowly on the sand, stretch my legs, give my tail a feeble wag, and all would be over. But no! Providence has decreed I shall be a female biped instead of a giraffe, and I pray, in the case of transmigration of souls, my soul may enter the body of a striding giraffe.

MOLLIE SIDDONS.

A HAWK'S NEST.

By Frank Savile. Illustrated by Warwick Goble.

"MY! if that ain't enough to make a body wild!" said Mrs. Summers, stamping her foot with irritation. She was looking at the ragged circle of feathers strewn beside the paddock rails. A hurried count of the disconsolate flock of poultry that cowered beneath the alfalfa stack showed her that her two special imported minorcas had disappeared.

"That's the third lot those dratted hawks have taken this week!" she cried, almost tearfully.

"Dad ought ter shoot 'em," drawled Pete.

His mother turned upon him angrily. She was not sorry to have a vent for her indignation, the hawks, the prime cause of it, not being available.

"'Dad' this and 'dad' that!" she declaimed shrilly. "Ain't your father enough to do with the barn fallin' down, and the stock roamin', and the creek a-dryin' up, over and above to stand like a scarecrow with a gun waitin' all day for hawks that's come and gone like shadders? Why don't you and your bone idle brothers find the nest and snare 'em, 'stid of standin' and moanin' about dad's job, and the fowls whipped away under your very eyes? 'Dad,' indeed!"

She walked back to the kitchen muttering inconsolably, leaving Pete the imperturbable still chewing the straw that seldom left his mouth.

"The nest's on Faro Crag," piped a shrill voice from behind. Pete turned slowly to confront his younger brother Ben.

"Is it, Mr. Know-all?" said Pete sarcastically.

"I seen it," said Ben unabashed.

"Huh!" said Pete, "then why ain't you taken it?" He raised the hoe on which he had been leaning and strolled off to the potato patch with an air of scornful incredulity. Yet ten minutes later Ben, passing the other side of the paddock rails, heard him and his second brother George discussing the information and planning to profit by it on the following day. His little soul revolted at such duplicity. The wretches! To take his special knowledge and use it without asking him to share the adventure! He resolved then and there to forestall them.

Faro Crag was five miles from Summers' ranch, beyond the lower Buttes, that swelled up in increasing altitudes to the mountains behind. At the foot, where winter avalanches had heaped broken rubble and earth against the rock face, it was overgrown with pine and bush. But from this it rose almost sheer, though the perpendicular face was seamed with ledges and grass-grown crevices. It was the sort of cliff that a Northumbrian fowler or a Faro Islander would have made little of, but to Ben's twelve-year-old experience it loomed practically unscalable. But his mother's scorn, together with his brother's purposed treason, were strong goads to his courage. He resolved to reach that nest before Pete laid hands upon it, and to do this he made up his mind to get a good start. Pete was not famed for early rising. As a rule it was not till the clothes were pulled off his bed, and his bare body cooled by the draught from open window and door, that he condescended to join the work-a-day world of the morning. If he got off before sunrise, Ben felt sure of three hours' start.

Mr. Summers came back to the mid-day meal to be told of the loss. He was a man who looked prematurely aged. Life with him had been a battle ever since he and his young wife left the English Midlands to try their luck in British Columbia, and had taken up a ranch in Kootenay, close to the border line of the States.

By dint of ceaseless effort they had kept their heads above water. Summers was his own stockman; Mrs. Summers attended to the dairy and the poultry yard. But both were fully aware that one whole season's drought would spell ruin. There was a mortgage of 1,200 dollars on the farm. Let the instalments fail for one year and the mortgagees would foreclose, and that would be the end of the pleasant farming life for them all.

Summers had his own bad news to communicate. He had found one of the steers

shot, the tongue and half-a-dozen pounds of meat cut out, and the body left to rot. It was not the first time it had happened during the last six months.

"Ten to one it's Montana Jim," the farmer explained. "He's been holding up the mail again. Day before yesterday he covered them in Teacup Cañon, ranged 'em all alongside the cliff, and took all there was to take. Like enough he's got a hide-away hereabouts, and wants food."

Mrs. Summers went pale.

"Would he come here, John?" she asked, tremulously.

Summers laughed drily.

"Wish he would," said he. "There's a thousand dollars on him, dead or alive. I could do for a try at that."

"Still, you don't know. Our money's as good as other people's."

"Don't you fret, mother. He flies at higher game. He's got as good an idea as most of what's in our cash-box."

"Well, with all he took from the mail he might at least pay for the meat," said Mrs. Summers, querulously. And her husband laughed again.

"He'd better send a remittance by the sheriff," said he. "He's the next man he's likely to meet. There's a posse out with Comanche trackers, but they've done no good. They run what the Redskins said was his trail, and it wasn't nothing but a strayed horse. I didn't hear as they caught even that."

He lit his pipe, lifted himself wearily from his chair, and went off to the barn. The boys helped their mother clear away, chopped some wood, and then made off to the creek side. Here Pete and George gave a spirited rendering of the holding up of the United States Mail, Pete being cast for the part of Montana Jim, George acting the valiant guard who refused to surrender, while Ben, allotted the part of passenger, was a trifle too realistically thumped—according to his own ideas—when he attempted to resist the bandit's appropriation of his treasures.

He had rather a restless night, being so full of the idea of forestalling his brothers. He awoke at least a dozen times in the dark, terrified by the idea that dawn had come and gone to leave him sleeping. But at last, as he peered through the little uncurtained window, he saw faint signs of rising pink in the east. He slipped on his clothes, stepped warily down the creaking stairs, and was running across the smooth grass of the paddock without having waked a soul. He was three miles on his way before the light really grew to day, and by the time the first rays of the sun beat upon the mountains he was staring up the face of Faro Crag.

He waited a moment or two. Then a dark object went with a whizz through the air, and on the ledge it had left he saw the ragged ends of the nest-sticks. He kicked off his shoes, and began to worm from ledge to ledge with bare hands and feet.

For the first few yards the going was not so bad. The rock was sound, and the tufts of grass that grew in the crevices were firmly rooted and gave hand-hold. But as he rose higher matters did not improve. The edges cut his feet and made them bleed. A tuft came away in his grasp, and for one terrible instant he hung against the cliff by one hand alone. Here and there the stone had been rotted by the weather, and broke away in showers as he fingered it cautiously before he tried it with his full weight. After a quarter of an hour's climbing he looked up to see the nest still a good twenty feet above him.

But his British pluck would not be denied. Thoughts of his mother's gratitude and of his brothers' reluctant admiration were hot in his heart. He scrambled from hold to hold, till he gained a broader ledge than most, not two yards below the eyrie. He could hear the hungry screams of the young birds.

As he stopped to get his breath, and to decide how to attain to the rift above him, there came to his ears the sound of a horse's hoofs thudding across the plain. He knelt and turned his face from the rock, filled with angry forebodings that Pete might have tracked him, and come to snatch the spoils from his grasp at the very last. But a quick glance showed him that it was not Pete.

A man was dismounting from a horse two hundred yards away. He looked unnaturally tall, Ben thought, till he noticed the thick bunchy shoes he wore. The man took the saddle and bridle off his nag, slung the saddle-bags over his shoulder, and smote the horse a resounding thwack upon the flank. The animal galloped unconcernedly away towards the plain again, stopping about half a mile further on, and beginning to feed. Then the man, supporting himself with a couple of sticks, began to hobble towards the undergrowth, beneath the ledge of which Ben sat.

The boy noticed the curious fashion of his walking. He raised one foot deliberately, put it slowly down, and then brought forward one of the sticks on which he leaned. This he repeated time after time with great regularity. But it was not till he was immediately below him that Ben began to understand the action. Wrapped and bandaged on his shoes, and on

to the ends of the two sticks, were cow-hoofs. He was leaving, not the footprints of a man, but the track of a steer!

Ben was not a fool. The fact that a man was covering up his trail into the hundreds of cattle markings that seamed the grass lands right up to the hills, was suspicious enough. There was only one man in the neighbourhood who would have reason to do such a thing, and the boy's breath came in gasps as he realised that the hobbling figure beneath him could be no other than the noted desperado, Montana Jim. His cheek went pale, and his eyes shone with excitement as he saw the outlaw disappear into the undergrowth.

His first notion was to descend as quickly as he could, make off, and summon assistance. Then he reflected that as likely as not he would be seen and shot. And then another thing gave a new trend to his thoughts. The hawk came screaming shrilly back to the nest, gave a wild peck at the invader, and reminded him of his original quest. After all, he might as well do what he had come to do, and then consider matters further. He caught his hand in a tuft, and his toes in a crevice, and swung himself on to the little platform where the nest was built. And here he found a new surprise.

A wide slit in the rock, concealed from below by the ledge, made a dark splash on the white freestone of the cliff. A cave was here—a cave unknown to anybody but himself. The splendid possibilities of such a thing appealed to his imagination, and he would have been a queer kind of boy if they had not done so. He resolved to explore the passage, at least as far as daylight would help him. He crawled into the hole on hands and knees, quite regardless of the screams of the kestrels behind him. Let George and Pete have their heroic masquerades—this was a real adventure to boast about.

After he had groped about thirty yards along the tunnel, the light of day began to fade. Yet it seemed to him that another light was growing in the darkness in front of him. He rubbed his eyes. Yes, there was no doubt about it.

HE LOOKED UNNATURALLY TALL, BEN THOUGHT.

There was a dim red glow replacing the white light that filtered in behind him.

For a moment he felt like scurrying to the entrance and flitting down the cliff just as fast as hands and feet would take him. But curiosity—and perhaps the thought of Pete and George—drove him on. A red glow in the heart of the

rock! This must be worth investigation. He made no noise as he slid through the dust on his bare feet, till suddenly he gave a faint gasp and stopped with an abruptness that left him rigid. The roof of the passage had suddenly soared away from him. He was standing at the top of a steep clay slope overlooking a spacious cavern!

Sixty or seventy feet below him was a level sandy floor, in the centre of which was a table. On this stood the lamp that illumined the cavern, and which had sent that faint red glow filtering up to him. Beside it lay a couple of rifles, a saddle-bag, a dirty plate or two, and a knife and fork.

"HANDS UP!" HE SHRILLED, IN HIS BOYISH TREBLE.

But the thing that drew the gasp from him and riveted his attention was the figure of a man—a man who stood before a small cracked looking-glass and parted his hair admiringly with a broken comb, and smoothed it with a dilapidated brush. And Ben recognised him in a moment for the seeming cripple who had hobbled into the shelter of the undergrowth a moment before. So this was Montana Jim's refuge. No wonder he could rob and ride away as he chose, covering up his tracks with that fine device of the cow's hoofs! Who would think of searching inside Faro Crag for a hiding-place?

But with these thoughts came back to his mind the very practical idea of immediately departing to find his father, the sheriff, and the searching posse. He turned noiselessly upon his heel.

A lump of clay cracked, crumbled, and dropped beneath his feet. The next instant Ben was flying down the greasy incline like a load of coal into a collier brig, his feet and arms asplay, his hands gripping vainly at the elusive soil, and terror nearly bursting his little heart. He swept down with a thud beside the table, making a crash that echoed and re-echoed through the cave.

The man before the looking-glass turned with an oath and a yell of amazement. Ben's headpiece was considerably jolted by the fall, but the drilling of the evening before was strong upon him. Not for nothing had Pete and George enacted the desperate affray of outlaw and sheriff's officer. The cue came to Ben with an accustomedness that surprised himself. He seized one of the rifles from the table.

"Hands up!" he shrilled in his boyish treble, pointing the muzzle full at the outlaw.

For a moment the other hesitated. Mere force of habit at first sent his closed fists into the air to be held high above his head. But the next instant he recognised the puny size of his antagonist. He roared another oath and made a rush at the boy.

Ben started, slipped, and jerked up the rifle. His fist closed convulsively upon the trigger. There was a flash and a loud report, multiplied endlessly into the echoes of the cave.

The man twisted round, clutched at his side, and for a long instant stood swaying dizzily. Then he seemed to shrink in upon himself, and sank down upon the floor in a confused heap.

Ben gave one glance at the prostrate form, and, with a yell, plunged wildly past it down the entrance, crashed through the underwood

outside, and raced out upon the plain as he had never raced before.

So it came about that half an hour later the sheriff, cantering along at the head of his armed posse and his Indian trackers, came full upon a wild-eyed, incoherent boy, who was stuttering absurdities concerning the very desperado that they were hunting. But when they had gathered more of his story, and had swarmed at his heels into the hidden cave below the Faro Crag, they found proofs that admitted of no denial. The famous frontier highwayman lay insensible; so his capture was made easy for them.

After they had all cheered themselves hoarse, the sheriff took Ben up in front of his saddle, and the whole outfit made off for Summers' ranch, the cowboys still yelling triumphantly as they raced along. And in this victorious guise the boy returned to his home.

It taxed the resources of the ranch to provide breakfast for such a body of visitors, but neither Summers nor his wife grumbled. Indeed, they had no cause to. For, after he had told his story, the sheriff presented the farmer with a most satisfactory document. It was a certificate upon the State treasury for one thousand dollars, money due to Benjamin Summers for bringing about the arrest of James Shepperton, *alias* Montana Jim.

Yet there was one speck to dim the brightness of the occasion, and Pete, with the unscrupulous eye of the elder brother, was the first to point it out.

"Anyway, you didn't take the hawk's nest, after all," said he. And Ben, who had entirely forgotten all about the screaming nestlings, was at a loss for an answer. But the sheriff heard.

"Not taken the hawk's nest!" bawled the burly frontiersman. "Well, if that don't dog my cats! Wasn't Montana Jim the poisonest bird of prey that ever raided a country-side? And ain't your little brother found *his* nest? I tell you what, my fine feller; you'll have to get up in the morning a sight earlier than you're accustomed to if you want to do a bit of birds'-nesting to beat that!"

And for this home-thrust Pete found no repartee.

IMPRESSIONS OF GENOA.

I WAS not in Genoa very long before I found the heat unpleasantly great. During my sojourn the average temperature was 91degs. Fahrenheit in the shade. There was no wind to refresh one, either. Very soon laziness and thirst overcame me, in which I was not alone, for everyone used the electric cars when available, and the *cafés* were never empty.

I was able, under the guidance of a friend, to "do" Genoa well, and was much struck with the many handsome palaces and churches, with their priceless contents. In the "White Palace" I saw the ashes of Christopher Columbus, who was born at Genoa. The ashes were in a handsome case, and looked very like pepper. Another palace is named the "Palace of the Staircase," as it contains a wonderful marble staircase, with two long flights of broad stairs, without any pillars to support it! It is considered an architectural feat.

Marble is cheap and common in Genoa. Many houses have marble staircases of which any English nobleman would be proud. I much enjoyed a visit to St. Catherine's Monastery. There I was shown the mummy of St. Catherine. A rose had been placed in her mouth, as the latter had become a little decayed!

In the old quarter of the city the houses are very high, and the streets so narrow that often I could touch either side with my outstretched arms. The streets are always overhung with newly washed clothes. The people who live here are very poor and dirty, and wear clothes of all colours—yellow and blue predominating.

The docks and harbour are very large, and the sailors therein are of all nationalities. It is interesting to note that the Genoese dock labourers have, at the time of writing, decided to help boycott the English shipping to show their sympathy with the Boers.

Most people have heard that Genoa is famous for its cake. It will come as a surprise to these people, therefore, to learn that "Genoa" cake does not exist in Genoa. The most popular cake is like a loaf of bread with sultanas in it. No baking powder or sugar is used. All meals seem to be composed of dishes made of macaroni, cheese, and butter, but I soon acquired a taste for them.

VERNON H. JONES.

THE KING'S HEAD STAMPS.

THE GREAT event of the day, from the stamp collector's point of view, is the issue of the new English stamps with the portrait of His Majesty King Edward VII.

As will be seen from our illustrations, they present a profile portrait embodied in a new design. On the left of the oval containing the portrait is a branch of laurel, and on the right a branch of oak leaves. The laurel on stamps betokens the victories of the reign, and the oak leaves, presumably, the strength and stability of the empire over which His Majesty has been called to reign. Over the head, like a keystone in an arch, is the crown, which has not yet been set upon the head of the new King.

Some good folks seem to think that after the coronation the design will undergo a further change, and the crown be placed upon the head of the King. Of that I can say nothing, but I should hardly imagine the stamps would have been engraved and issued, as they are, within a few months of the coronation if they were to be changed so quickly. The portrait would certainly look more dignified, more regal, and less commonplace if crowned. However, for the present, we have to take the stamps as they are, and, on the whole, it is admitted that the design is not unpleasing—it is passable without being very striking.

The values of the new stamps are ½d. green, 1d. carmine, 2½d. blue, and 6d. purple, all on white wove paper, watermarked, as before, with a large crown, and perforated 14. The ½d., 1d., and 6d. are of the same design, and differ only from the 2½d. in the tablet of value.

The 1d. has been changed in colour from purple to red, and the 2½d. from purple on blue to blue, to conform to the Postal Union arrangement, under which the ½d. is to be green, the 1d. red, and the 2½d. blue. This country is one of the last to conform to this recommendation, but after much official hesitation it has at last fallen into line. As a consequence, the 6d. on red paper has been changed to the colour of the now obsolete 1d., and the coloured paper is discarded.

It is understood that the rest of the stamps will undergo as little change as possible, merely the King's head being introduced in place of that of our late Queen, the stamps remaining otherwise unaltered in design and colour. It is said, however, that some additional high values between the £1 and £5 will be issued.

The new stamps were issued on January 1st, and, as the New Year's Day commenced when the clocks finished striking the midnight hour, many enthusiastic stamp collectors rushed into such of the leading post offices as were open, bought sets of the new stamps, and forthwith stuck them on envelopes already addressed to themselves, and posted them right away, with the object of securing the very earliest possible

dated and timed post-mark cancellation of the day of issue. Many bought whole sheets, others panes, or blocks, or pairs, and these will be carefully preserved as first printings of the new stamps. I have seen a few pronounced shades, mostly in the 2½d., which is not surprising when it is remembered that these stamps have been printed by the million.

The earliest cancellations will probably be those of Dublin; for there, it is reported, the post office ran out of the old stamps before the last day of the old year closed, and were compelled to open and use the new stock to supply the ordinary postal requirements. Therefore, once more the Emerald Isle scores over the Saxon.

At some of the London offices the demand was so great that the officials restricted the sales of the new stamps to make them last out. In one office they were doled out in shilling's-worths. Another office was completely cleared out within an hour of opening.

No fewer than 82,270,000 of the new stamps had been issued up to Thursday night—the second day of issue. The Postmaster-General had instructed the Inland Revenue Department to supply post offices with the new issue up to a maximum of a fortnight's supply. The old stamps are to be used up before the new issue is to be put on general sale, so that it will probably be found that the old stamps will be on sale, and will be handed out to applicants unless the new stamps are specially asked for.

I heard of one amusing case in a suburban office, where a party handed in a dozen of the old green 1s. to be changed for the new issue. As the green 1s. is now catalogued at 2s. 6d., and the new issue may be had *ad lib.* at face, the exchange was not a profitable one; but the party was evidently not a stamp collector.

The figures which have been made public in connection with this new issue, will be of interest to stamp collectors, as an indication of the improbability of common English stamps —or, indeed, the common stamps of any important State—ever increasing much in value. We are told that the usual average weekly issue of 1d. stamps is 48,000,000 in 200,000 sheets of 240 stamps per sheet. The first day's sale of the new 1d. stamps was 49,200,000; of the ½d. stamps 29,680,000 were issued; of the 2½d. 1,830,720; and of the 6d. 1,560,000. The average weekly issue of 2½d. and 6d. stamps is about 1,200,000, and of the ½d. about 28,000,000.

The total face value of the new stamps issued from Somerset House, the source of supply, during the first forty-eight hours of the new year is stated to have been £270,000. Large supplies were, of course, bought for and at once forwarded to stamp dealers all over the world. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that a very appreciable number of the stamps sold in the first few days will go into stamp collections at home and abroad, and will therefore be a clear profit to the Post Office, and a profit which will materially help the national revenue when the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes to balance up the items for his budget.

So far as can be gathered, the new stamps have met with a varying reception throughout the country. The head, which is the work of an Austrian sculptor—Mr. Emil Fuchs—domiciled in this country, is declared by the *Yorkshire Post* to be weak and finnicking in treatment. The *Birmingham Gazette*, on the other hand, hails it as "perfectly beautiful," and as "reminding one of a fine cameo." The Irish *Freeman's Journal* declares the portrait to be the most curious presentment of the features of King Edward VII. that one could conceive. The face it condemns as "cadaverous, hungry looking, discontented; the very opposite of the reality as the public know it."

It will be interesting to note how the new stamps pass muster as time goes on, and when they have been discussed, as they are sure to be, in Parliament. The wish of Parliament has been roughly over-ridden in the selection of the design. It has been refused any voice in the matter, and it will not be surprising if it criticises the design severely, and even generates a public opinion against it, for there are not a few members who hold that the occasion should have been used for securing a series of postage stamps that would have been really worthy of the Empire

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SOME INTERESTING NEW ISSUES.

I HAVE already chronicled and commented on the issue of the new King's head stamps. Apart from this issue, there is not much of special interest in the new stamps of the month.

The crop of war provisionals from the United States of Colombia marks the continuance of hostilities and the disturbance of the postal arrangements in that "united" part of the world. Bolivia has commenced the issue of a very beautifully engraved series of portrait stamps. Later on, no doubt I shall be able to give the names of the individuals whose portraits are given. The annexation of the Cook Islands is marked on the stamps by a

curious smudge over the face of Queen Makea. The smudge is said to represent a crown. Those old boys who specialise the stamps of New Zealand will be interested in the news that the colonially printed picture series is now being perforated 14½ by a new machine recently sent out from England. The set of colonial prints, perf. 11, should be completed without loss of time. From Spain we are promised a series of stamps bearing portraits of the Alphonsos who have ruled that country. If the portraits are well engraved from authentic paintings, they should be exceedingly interesting and historically valuable.

ABYSSINIA.—The current stamps of this country have been overprinted with the word "Ethiopie." This overprint is done in violet with a rubber stamp. Large numbers of Abyssinian stamps have recently been mysteriously put on the market unused and considerably under their face value. The overprint is designed to prevent the use of this mysterious stock for defrauding the revenue of the country. There have also been rumours of a new issue. As a result of the mysterious supplies from Paris, the current set of Abyssinians can be had at a very low price.

ANTIOQUIA.

ANTIOQUIA.—We illustrate two stamps which are said to have been issued in this department of the United States of Columbia in July or August of last year. They are type-set, and very roughly printed on common paper. There are said to be four minor varieties. Perf. 12 by 11½. 1 centavo blue, 1 centavo brown.

BOLIVIA.—Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. send us two stamps of a new series for this country. As will be seen from the illustrations, they are excellent portrait designs; but we cannot say at present who are represented.

BOLIVIA.

They are apparently the work of the American Bank Note Company. Perf. 12. 1 centavo puce, 2 centavos green.

COLOMBIA.—This country, which is still in the throes of revolution, is sending out a great many provisionals as a consequence of the disturbance of its postal arrangements. These provisionals are generally very crude lithographs. Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. send us a 1 centavo blue and 2 centavos brown, recently issued at Cartagena, which we illustrate. They are printed in blocks of twenty, and are afterwards hand stamped in red with a band of interlaced links, each impression covering five stamps. Pin perf.

COLOMBIA.

COOK ISLANDS.—Consequent upon the annexation of these islands by New Zealand, the stamps of Queen Makea are being overprinted with a crown, making the smudge we have already referred to. The initials, "V.R.I.," which have served the purpose in the case of the stamps of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, would surely have been sufficient, and less of an unnecessarily offensive disfigurement. Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. send us the 1d. value, with the crown overprint.

JAPAN.

JAPAN.—The 5 rin stamp has been replaced by one of the same current design and colour, but with the value expressed as ½ sen.

MONACO.—Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. send us the current 25c., changed in colour from green to the Postal Union colour, blue.

NEW ZEALAND.—The postal authorities of this colony have had a new perforating machine sent out from England, and are now using it to perforate the latest local printings of the Waterlow picture series. We have the 1d. universal postage stamp and the ½d. (Mount Cook) from Messrs. Whitfield King & Co., with the new perforation, which gauges 14½.

Some people seem to think that the local prints, now they are being perforated with the same gauge machine as the London prints, will be indistinguishable, but they forget the difference of paper, the London prints being printed on wove unwatermarked paper, and the current colonials on paper watermarked N.Z. and star.

TRINIDAD.—I am indebted to Mr. A. Lewis Inness, a member of our CAPTAIN Club in Trinidad, for the earliest information that has reached me of the issue of a new 1d. stamp for this colony, and for a specimen for description. It is of the current design, printed in black on red paper. Watermark crown and "C. A.," and perf. 14 as before. This new stamp, Mr. Inness informs me, was issued on December 19th last, and is, it is rumoured, the forerunner of further changes.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. E. C.—German Colonies, last issue, are not a good investment. Falklands, set of eight, used, are worth from 4s. to 5s. I know of no reprints of Labuan or North Borneo rubbish.

C. G.—Your money will be better spent on waste paper than on North Borneo or Labuan stamps. No boy should be so foolish as to buy such worthless rubbish at any price.

H. S. D.—The English Jubilee post-card, used, is catalogued by Gibbons at 5s.

H. C. C. (SOUTHAMPTON.)—The Prince of Wales's Hospital Stamps are in no sense postage stamps, and are, therefore, not entitled to a place in a postage stamp album. They are merely interesting labels.

L. S. (MAIDSTONE).—The Transvaal ½d. green E.R.I. is worth about 6d., and the 1d. E.R.I. about 2d. The O.F.S. fiscals are of very little value.

G. F. L. (ABERYSTWYTH).—Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., 391, Strand, publish an excellent album, known as "The Imperial," for Great Britain and Colonies, but there can, of course, be no separate album for King's Head Stamps alone on the same lines till Colonial King's Heads have been issued. A blank album will best suit your purpose in the meanwhile.

C. G. C.—(1) The 1s. red and green English stamp has not yet gone out of use. (2) Don't know the Colchester dealers mentioned by you. The others are reliable firms.

V. K.—Yes, plate numbers are collected by specialists, and some are scarce, especially 225, 1d. red.

A BAD LIGHT.

MR. FINNS: "What we want in the globe is a sun-fish!"

"MY FAVOURITE CHARACTER IN ENGLISH HISTORY."

JOHN HAMPDEN.

IN selecting a "favourite" character from among that motley throng we meet with in our history, a character which turns the scale of our moral appreciation, we instinctively set up as our criterion of merit those admirable qualities, a perfect blending of which few men possess—courage, moral and physical, honesty, simplicity, sympathy, gentleness. These, aye, and more than these, John Hampden, the Champion of Constitutional Liberty, possessed.

We get a first insight into the nature of the disposition of the "plain Buckinghamshire squire" when his courageous but misguided King endeavoured, contrary to all laws of right and common justice, to coerce his patient and loyal subjects into paying "forced loans." The people were asked to "lend," but Hampden, ever with the banner of his principles before him, unhesitatingly refused to jeopardise the safety of the freeman by "lending" to one—even though that one were the King—who openly disavowed his liability as a borrower. It was the refusal of a man who realised the danger he was in, in common with his fellows, and not that of meanness or selfish introspection—the resistance born of a just and well-balanced mind, and not of a sordid imagination.

JOHN HAMPDEN.

In the consideration of that portion of his life which is so closely connected with Wentworth, and in which his action under similar circumstances compares so favourably with that of Wentworth, our just pride in such a fellow-countryman receives a fresh stimulus.

At that time Wentworth was Hampden's firm friend, their sentiments common, when the King endeavoured to seduce those great men of the opposition whom he could see would, if brought to his side, be of great use to him in the future—a future, for him, dark and cloudy enough. Among those so raised socially, but debased morally, was Wentworth. Wentworth the Commoner bowed low before ambition and became Wentworth the Courtier—but more, the renegade.

This is not really surprising; it is at most but natural; and it is this very fact which so clearly illustrates his less vacillating friend's moral firmness. Hampden's principles, as we have said, were those of Wentworth, but when the latter threw his moral convictions to the winds, Hampden stood to his guns in spite of all the allurements and enticements appertaining to the position of a friend of the Court.

It was then that the King, being in sore need, re-established, with the help of his slave, the renegade Wentworth, the old constitutional tax of ship-money; but he *applied* it illegally. Once more the people's defender distinguished himself. He refused to pay.

Now, this act might appear to the superficial observer one of haste—an act of boastful rebellion or of blatant bravado. It was neither of these. The thoughtful, unbiassed mind sees in it only a brave and manly refusal on his part and on that of his fellows to undergo an unconstitutional and unrighteous imposition.

Hampden, nevertheless, fully realised what he exposed himself to. He knew that in place of the few paltry shillings he was now called upon to pay, he would later be put to a heavy expense as a result of thus supporting the liberty and prosperity of the entire kingdom. But he remained true to the cause he had espoused, and which he believed right; and though the suborned satellites of the King forced a very small majority against him in judgment, Hampden was the real gainer, for the love, deep-seated and unaffected, of one's own people is productive of more satisfaction than the doubtful glory of gold-won honours, and gives its possessor strength to triumph over all obstacles.

This brave man remained throughout faithful to the cause for which he finally gave his life (and who could give more?) on the fatal field of Chalgrove. His death was characteristic of the man. While suffering excruciating agony, the effects of mortal wounds, his only care was for the success of the Parliamentary troops, which meant the triumph of the dearly cherished wish for which he had so long fought and struggled.

He was buried with military honours in the parish church of Hampden, mourned deeply and sincerely by all who had ever cause to come into contact with him either in private or in public life.

HEDLEY V. FIELDING.

A CAVALIER MAID.

The Romance of a King's Messenger.

By Clifford Mills.

Illustrated by E. F. Skinner.

Etienne Glanvil, an orphan, grand-daughter of the celebrated French soldier, the Marquis de Latour, is living with distant relations—Sir Geoffrey and Lady Stapleton—near Torrington, in Devonshire, when the Parliamentary troops rout the Western Loyalists and drive them towards the Cornish border of Devon. Etienne by chance meets a wounded Cavalier, who is carrying a message from the King to Lord Hopton; owing to circumstances recounted in the opening chapters of the story, it devolves upon her to deliver the King's packet to the Loyalist general. She is suspected of being in possession of the packet by Giles Harrison, a Roundhead officer and suitor for her hand. With the idea of hurrying into Torrington in search of one Stephen Gale, who is favourable to the King, Etienne leaves the Stapletons' house by a secret door only to stumble upon a Roundhead sentinel, who would have detained her but for the intervention of an unknown officer, who proves to be none other than the great Fairfax. Arrived at Torrington, Etienne is so angered by the rejoicings of the crowd at the rout of the Loyalists that she forgets herself, and cries "Shame on ye all, traitors!" Ill would have befallen her had not a huge man carried her into safety at his own house. The man proves to be Stephen Gale. She is suspected of being a traitress by the wounded Cavalier himself, who escapes from the town and makes for the inn at Langtree. To escape the Roundheads and follow to Langtree to deliver to him the letter, she enters a deserted house, where she finds a young gentleman's discarded dress. This she dons and proceeds on her way. When well out of Torrington she falls in with Sir Harry Burgoin, a friend of Lord Fairfax, who recognises the clothes she wears as having belonged to his young brother, recently murdered at Torrington. She denies knowledge of the crime, but will not explain how she came by the clothes. Catching sight of the Cavalier she is seeking, she gallops on, but Sir Harry brings her down with a pistol shot. She proves, however, to be only slightly wounded in the wrist, and after an adventure with Roundheads in a tavern, she journeys on towards Stratton, accompanied by the Cavalier, to whom she has yielded up the precious packet. Deeming her to be the brother of the maid whom he met near Torrington, he greatly embarrasses her by confessing his love for that lady. At Stratton "Tree Inn," the tale of Etienne's adventures whilst in possession of the King's letter wins her an enthusiastic welcome. Circumstances compel her to confess to her disguise; fever follows, and she remains at Stratton under the care of her grandfather, the Marquis de Latour, when the Loyalists retreat further westward. Months later, after peace has been restored, Etienne, whilst walking out with her grandfather, is confronted by one of Giles Harrison's spies. Panic-stricken, she hastens after Latour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MEETING.

HALF-WAY down the other side of the hill I saw the majestic figure of my grandfather, striding slowly along with bent head.

He turned as he heard me, and, with his habitual courtesy, awaited my overtaking him. But his face was so stern and his mien so haughty, I found it impossible to acquaint him with the cause of my fear, and, contenting myself with the security I ever found in his presence, walked on in silence by his side.

As we went I cast many a backward glance of fear, but I saw no signs of the spy. Pondering, I found little that Giles Harrison could now gain by discovering me, save for the purpose of revenge at my outwitting him with the King's letter, and seeing that the rebels were now victorious, I felt he would deem me too poor an enemy for his ever increasing ambition. Yet the satisfaction on the face of the spy at beholding me gave unrest to my heart.

But as the days went by and nothing untoward befel, I gathered courage, and dared to hope that I had thought more of the meeting of the spy than the occasion merited.

Alas! with Latour matters mended little. He spoke no more of his plans, and I did not dare inquire; though oft did I marvel how long we should tarry in England, or if, indeed, he would now wish me to return with him to France.

Remembering his many kindnesses, remorse tormented me, and I watched his face anxiously for any sign of relenting. But his features might have been carved in stone, so fixed were they in disdain.

At last, and only now, did I feel that I saw Latour, the warrior-noble of France, the relentless foe of his enemies, the father, who, for pride's sake, had sacrificed even his affection for his only child, and lived in solitary splendour, a grand, but lonely old man.

Oft did the tears fill mine eyes at the wall of rock against which my new-found love and respect were beating—bruising themselves. For I loved Latour, this heroic grandfather of mine, with a love passing that of most daughters. Could I ever forget that moment when he had

taken me to his proud heart, or the emotion that then had torn his breast? And now, alas! had I hurt his pride.

Little by little did we hear tidings of what was taking place at Truro, where the army of the King had at last retreated. Early in the month had the Prince of Wales left Pendennis Castle for the Scilly Isles, and now came the news of the signing of the treaty, and the disbanding of the Royal army of the west.

Ah, dear! how I grieved, heart-broken at the news! Our poor, poor King! But to my grandfather I mentioned not my sorrow, because of the estrangement that had fallen between us.

But one day there came to me a letter, borne by a lad. Eagerly I broke the seal, and, glancing down the page, saw that it bore the signature of Sir Harry Burgoin.

It told me little, but I knew, seeing its inscription, he had discovered my secret, and knew me for the maid I was.

He held, he said, revenge in his grasp, and waited only to produce the clothes in testimony, before openly accusing the murderer; and he begged me to meet him with the gauds at a place he named near, it being expedient for his plans that he came not to our village.

With the letter in my hand, I turned eagerly to Latour. But, as usual, when I made sign of approachment he drew back.

"Some petition, I presume," he said, with the haughty insolence he could at times so cruelly assume, "from one of your English paupers. I have oft seen the like at the Louvre, where one cannot air one's jewels at a festival but one is pestered for a loan by such beggarly exiles."

I crushed the paper in my hand, and with burning cheeks left the room. So he spoke of my countrymen, of the honourable misfortune of those poor, proud English abroad. Oh, cruel Latour! I would ask no counsel of thee, I vowed.

So I sent my word that I would meet Sir Harry as he desired, and that evening Latour had no need to shrink from my advancements.

But the morrow dawned a day of such rain and tempest as I had not oft seen, even in our wild west country. I rose early and, dressing, marvelled if even Sir Harry, great though his need, would keep tryst on such a morning. And here a difficulty came to my mind. For Nanette, whom I purposed taking with me, dreaded the rain which tortured her bones with cramp and pain, so that nothing short of necessity would ever induce her to stir abroad in it. What would she think if I importuned her to go out in such a tempest? "A day not fit for a dog," she would grumble, and doubt my love that could e'en ask her.

Thinking thus, I saw naught but to go alone, and this being so I determined to say nothing to Nanette, who would fidget herself into a fever if she knew that I was away. And having so settled, I went down to breakfast with Latour.

He looked up as I entered. Perchance he had missed my usual good-night, which, last evening for the first time, I had dared to neglect. Penitent, I dropped him my curtsey, and received in return his salutation.

His face was paler than usual, and he remarked that he had slept infamously.

"Whatever you say in favour of your country, Mademoiselle," he said drily, "you cannot in truth avow that the climate in these parts is propitious."

I shook my head, for in truth the least said about that the better. But afterwards, in his glance that followed me as I left the room, methought I read a relenting, and, remembering this when I was dressed in cloak and hood, I hung about in the passage and watched him writing in the room within.

As I did so, a sudden impulse stirred me, and, chancing rebuff, I went in quietly and, bending, kissed the white, strong hand that supported his leaning head.

I found myself trembling violently. But all he said, as he looked up, was, "Going out, child? Well, let not the wind blow you away, for in truth it is strong enough. *Parbleu!* what a country!"

Out in the road the storm rushed at its will, making of me so poor a thing that I scarce could get onward. But the thought that I was serving the friend who had so generously stepped betwixt danger and my dear love, made me think lightly of the rude wind's buffetings, and I walked on steadily, the tempest shrieking about my path.

The place named by Sir Harry Burgoin was a spot well secluded from the regular wayfarers, but, to-day, of these there were none to be seen, even on the usual paths.

What a morn to be sure! What a comfort Nanette knew naught of my journey! Then, with a start, I bethought me that, careless maiden as I was, I had left the letter of Sir Harry Burgoin behind in my chamber. Sore troubled was I, until I reminded me that Nanette was innocent of all knowledge of writing, and went on comforted.

But so bad was the day, and so miry the road, I had quite rested my mind to find myself the sole keeper of the rendezvous, when, as I turned from the road and entered the secluded way named in the letter, I saw that a horseman, heavily cloaked, was waiting under the shelter of a holly tree, about twenty yards down the grassy lane.

Thankful was I to think that my battling with the wind had not been for naught, and was hastening onwards, when at sight of my approach the horseman turned and rode quickly forward to meet me.

The wind, blowing up from the sea, as I stood in the teeth of it there, on the top of the hill, blew my cloak athwart my eyes, and, when I had struggled free of it, the rider was up to my side.

Without a word he swung himself from his horse and bowed before me. "Mademoiselle," he cried in a voice that chilled my blood, "it is indeed Mademoiselle? Then I have won the last move of our game!"

Dear heart! There in the lone, lone lane, amidst the wild storm, did I meet again—Giles Harrison.

Giles Harrison truly, but so changed from the man I knew, no longer *débonnair*, faultless, but splashed, draggled, disreputable, with eyes in which shone a wild light strange to me.

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CHAPTER XIX.

AT WIDEMOUTH BAY.

My first impulse was to fly. But he caught my arm with a cruel force.

"No, my ladybird," he said, "Fate has not so favoured me for naught; thou shalt come with me."

But I cried out in horror, and, struggling desperately with all my strength, he found it hard to compel me, the horse he held, by its plunging, aiding my endeavours to escape.

Taking advantage of his good beast's prancings I tore myself free from his grasp, but he was as quick and caught me, dragging me back. "Fool," he cried, and, raising his hand, he hit me with clenched fist in the face.

In a blood-red pain and blindness I fell, and knew naught till I found myself held in front of him on his horse, which was galloping head to wind down the hill to the sea.

Though a terrible singing and pain in my head sickened me, my wits were as clear as before, and, perchance, something in the wild sea breeze that caught us roused my courage, so that I felt more loathing than fear for the hateful and cruel man who had thus used me.

Once he spoke, but the wind shrieking by tore his words from my hearing. Oh! the wild ride, and the cruel strength of the arm that held me, as downward we went, till the lane opened wide and there was the sea, angry, raging, lashing its huge white waves on the rocky shore of a wild and desolate bay.

Dear heart! To my left arose the same black headland I had seen with such joy when I had ridden that night for the King. Alas, alas, for me now! Where was he taking me? A cold fear caught my heart, for he rode straight onward to the seething waters ahead.

I cried aloud then, but scarce could I hear my own voice above the tempest. I thought of Latour and poor Nanette, who would never know my fate. I thought, too, of my love, and all my youth rose in repulsion of this death that threatened me—death at the hands of such a man!

But just as I deemed it sure, he turned his horse and rode leftwards to a house I had not before observed, that, like a bedraggled sea-bird, was perched upon a piece of rising ground on that lone shore. A wall surrounded the house, and in front of this he drew rein and dismounted.

A villainous looking man, who had apparently been watching our approach, now came forward. To me and my ill-concealed terror he paid no attention, but, taking the horse, led it through the gateway, Giles Harrison with me, his hapless victim, following close after.

Inside the walls I found myself in a wild and desolate garden, but here Giles Harrison stayed not, but hurried on to the house, a dreary ruin of a place, the contemplation of which filled me with new alarm.

Within, its empty, gloomy aspect, barren as it was of all human belongings, calmed not my terrors, and I shivered as I glanced around me.

"Nay," cried Giles Harrison, "have no fear, Mademoiselle," and he led me to one of the two stools, which, with a rickety table, were the sole articles of furniture of the dark, low room that was lighted by two narrow windows, the one in front of me looking across the angry sea.

Striving to conceal my fear, I sank down on the stool and regarded him with shrinking terror.

He stood for a moment in front of me, looking down into my averted face. Then he laughed harshly.

"No," he cried, "be not afraid—I will not hurt thee again, Mademoiselle; I shall find through all eternity the blow I gave thee hard to forgive."

Then he seated himself on the stool opposite, and drawing it to the rough table looked steadily across the latter into my face.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "to understand one another we must recapitulate events somewhat. Look through the window, Mademoiselle, on to the rocks which are now visible—soon will it be full tide, when we, in the boat you see now high and dry on the sands, will go forth together; who

knows whither. I would not have us in such close company divided by misunderstanding.'

My gaze was riveted on the waves—white-capped, tumultuous. What boat could live in such a sea?

"Mademoiselle, you think we shall not go far," he said, watching my face, his back to the sea. But I did not reply. I had no wish to let him know more of my fear.

"What matter? We must all die," he went on, still in the same tense tone, "and who knows whether death in an angry sea is not the most easy exodus from life? My grandfather, Mademoiselle, was a Spanish sailor, captain of a craft that oft did run to England. Like all his nation, he hated your insolent English—but for all that he found an English maid so fair that he married her, and lived in this grey island for years. Yet, Mademoiselle, did he so nurse his hatred for your race, that when Spain sent forth her great Armada, my grandfather left wife and child to starve for 'aught he cared, and offered his services on one of those great ships of England's enemies. Mademoiselle, he went down to the sea in a storm, and saw not his heart's vengeance. Happier than he, Mademoiselle, I see mine!"

I shuddered; his calmness chilled my blood, and with a short laugh he continued:—

"Hadst thou not met me this morning I must still have taken this journey, for my game is played out, each card, Mademoiselle. Listen!" he

I STARTED BACK WITH A CRY AT THE SUDDEN PASSION OF HIS VOICE.

exclaimed, his voice rising as he sprang to his feet, "I have played it well against odds. I, the son of the crazy preacher, Ezekiel Giles, to what self-advancement might I not have turned the tumult of this country, but for two mistakes! Only two, Mademoiselle — one, that I loved you."

I started back with a cry at the sudden passion of his voice, the glitter of his eyes, as, leaning across the table, he confronted me.

"Yes, loved you, proud, insolent, noble blooded

—I loved you, and each move I made, each trick I played that led me out of the mire of my birth a step nearer to you, gave me hope that the power I should one day wield would tempt you, the haughty aristocrat, to my feet. That was my greatest mistake, for ambition will brook no secondary worship. The other," he said, with a shrug of his shoulder "—bend your head, pretty one, and listen—in all the world none but you will ever hear the confession—I killed Hugh Burgoin."

"You?" I cried, horror unchaining speech.

"Yes," said he, calmly. "I killed him; why, it matters little, save that he crossed my path of advancement, and so put thee further from me."

But I fell sobbing in an agony of horror. Alas! that he should thus unbosom his heart of so hideous a secret showed with grim portent his intents towards me.

"After all, Mademoiselle," he cried, looking down upon me unmoved by my terror or grief, "you have also your revenge. But for you, who stepped between, I should have done Cromwell good service; but for you, who by some strange witchery did unearth those hidden garments I had given into the safe custody of old Juan—ever my creature—I had been yet undiscovered, and not a hunted and desperate man, pursued ever by the deadly vengeance of Sir Harry Burgoin, friend of Fairfax. Such the return for the love of a life. Is not thy revenge keen, Mademoiselle, that I, who climbed so fast as to almost reach the heights of fame, have been undone by thee?"

"Nay, nay," I sobbed, "naught did I with malice. I want not revenge, I crave it not, only I pray thee leave me to live.'

But he, unheeding, strode the room implacable. "Mademoiselle," he cried, pausing in front of me, "I have seen two sides of this life of ours; I have tasted what it is to be spurned, derided; I have felt the exultation of power. Now to-day I stand robbed of all for which I have striven, with the knowledge that even the creatures who have licked my hand in fear have turned their services to mine enemies and are helping to hunt me down. But I have played my last trick well; I discovered Sir Harry's intent, and caused his delay at the tryst this morning, and so go not to my fate alone. Ah! my wild bird, beat not thyself against this meagre cage. Look out! the tide flows in, and soon we will start over the sea, with Fate as our helmsman, and Death for the priest that shall bind us together!"

His dark eyes glowed as he spoke, his neck was rigid. I saw in his glance the madness that illumined his father's, the preacher, and knew I was doomed.

Here came a knock at the door, and I sprang to my feet with a cry. But it was only the voice of the man I had seen at the entrance.

Opening the door, Giles Harrison went out into the passage, and I could hear him talking to the other, who, with much grumbling, was striving to make a hard bargain for his boat.

In despair I glanced round my prison. A window faced landwards, and to this I crossed cautiously, the voices in the passage still being in deep argument, and looked out.

I saw the yellow moorland and the lane, but not a soul was in sight—nothing but driving rain. I wrung my hands in despair; alas! what hope could I have of rescue, and had I not by the very secrecy of my errand destroyed myself?

Fascinated by horror, I found myself drawn to the other window. Dear heart! The rolling water had nearly covered the shining sands; the black teeth of the rocks were scarce visible above the seething breakers.

A few more minutes, and then black horror and death in the angry sea. Distracted, I beat my hands against the tiny lattice, and, the window falling open, I felt once more the strength of the storm.

But I heeded it not, and, thrusting my head out as far as I could, I now saw, standing on a low wall beneath, a woman, ragged, bare-headed, heedless of the tempest, looking seawards.

I caught the lattice and beat it till it splintered against the wall of the house, shrieking meanwhile to attract her attention, and at last she turned and caught sight of me at the window.

I beckoned to her in frantic gestures, and she came on till she was beneath the window. But though she raised her voice, I could hear naught of what she said, and seeing this, she signed with her hand and disappeared round the house.

Guessing her intent, I was half-way across to the other window when Giles Harrison re-entered the room. The cold blast rushing through the broken lattice made him glance at me in dark suspicion.

"Mademoiselle doubts my devotion," he said, coming towards me, "if she dreams I would thus permit her to escape."

Transfixed by fear I stood before him, and in the silence there fell on the window behind me the rattle of shingle. I knew it for the action of the woman, and realised, with despair, that I was lost.

But he started at the sound. "What?" cried he, standing in the centre of the room, alert, his lips lifted, his white teeth gleaming as in a snarl, and fear—yes, fear—in his eyes.

I watched him walk across the room, his face working in nervous tremors, and open the lattice

with a stealthy caution. I could not comprehend, and I shivered in anticipation of his cry of triumph at the pitiable opponent he would discover outside.

But instead, he uttered a hoarse scream, and springing to his side I looked through the window to see not only the woman I expected, but, close to where the lane merged into the shore, two horsemen. Ah, dear Heaven! The nearest, broad-shouldered, majestic, was Latour!

The very sight of my grandfather inspired me with a wild courage. Pushing aside Giles Harrison, who suffered me strangely, I screamed aloud, "Latour! Latour!"

And the storm blowing landwards carried my voice to him, so that he looked up, and, seeing me, came on towards us with a great cry. And now did I see that he who rode with my grandfather was none other than Sir Harry Burgoin.

Screaming to them to come onwards, I turned to find myself alone in the room. Terrified, I ran out into the passage, which also was empty, and from thence gained the garden, at the gate of which I was met by Latour, who, unmounted and hatless, his white hair blown with the storm, caught me to his heart.

For a moment I clung to him, regardless of all save the happiness of such shelter; then, looking from his embrace, I saw, on the sands below, Giles Harrison pushing the boat out into the foam-curled ocean, now racing high at the turn of the flood. And, dear heart! galloping along the speckled shore, and even into the bubbling waves, was Sir Harry Burgoin.

Enthralled, mine eyes never left them—the murderer and the grim avenger.

Twice did Giles Harrison go forth in that wild flood, and twice did the waves refuse so guilty a burden, and bring him back, well-nigh within reach of his enemy. Then a breaker, high, mountainous, caught his boat, and tossing it high, I saw him standing in the stern, a dark figure against the background of white foam; then the wave raced seawards and I saw the boat no more.

Appalled by the sight, and torn by a strange and terrible pity, I fell from Latour's embrace to my knees, and covered my eyes from the terror of that avenging sea and its hapless victim.

I found myself praying wildly, with streaming tears.

"Oh, Lord forgive—for our sweet Saviour's sake—forgive this man!" I cried. "Dear God of pity, forgive!"

When at length I looked up, save for the tossing foam, naught was upon the waters. And Sir Harry Burgoin, with a white, awe-stricken face, was leading his horse towards us.

CHAPTER XX.

MADEMOISELLE DE LATOUR.

WEEPING sadly at the pity of it all, I rose at my grandfather's tender request and turned, shuddering, from the sight of that terrible ocean. But when I sought for my hood, I found it gone, and, to my surprise, Latour drew it from under his riding cloak.

"Ah, my child!" he cried, brokenly, "when I found this at the end of the lane and saw there the marks of the struggle, then did I know that evil had come to thee."

In the shelter of his strong arm I rode homewards, with Sir Harry Burgoin at our side. But at the cross-roads, despite my grandfather's protestations, Sir Harry left us.

"Nay, let me away," he said sadly, "to make peace with my Creator. What better than a murderer am I myself, save for the grace of God?"

And almost in silence we parted, for the horror of the sea was upon us, and the presence of an avenging God was crushing our weak, human hearts. So we parted.

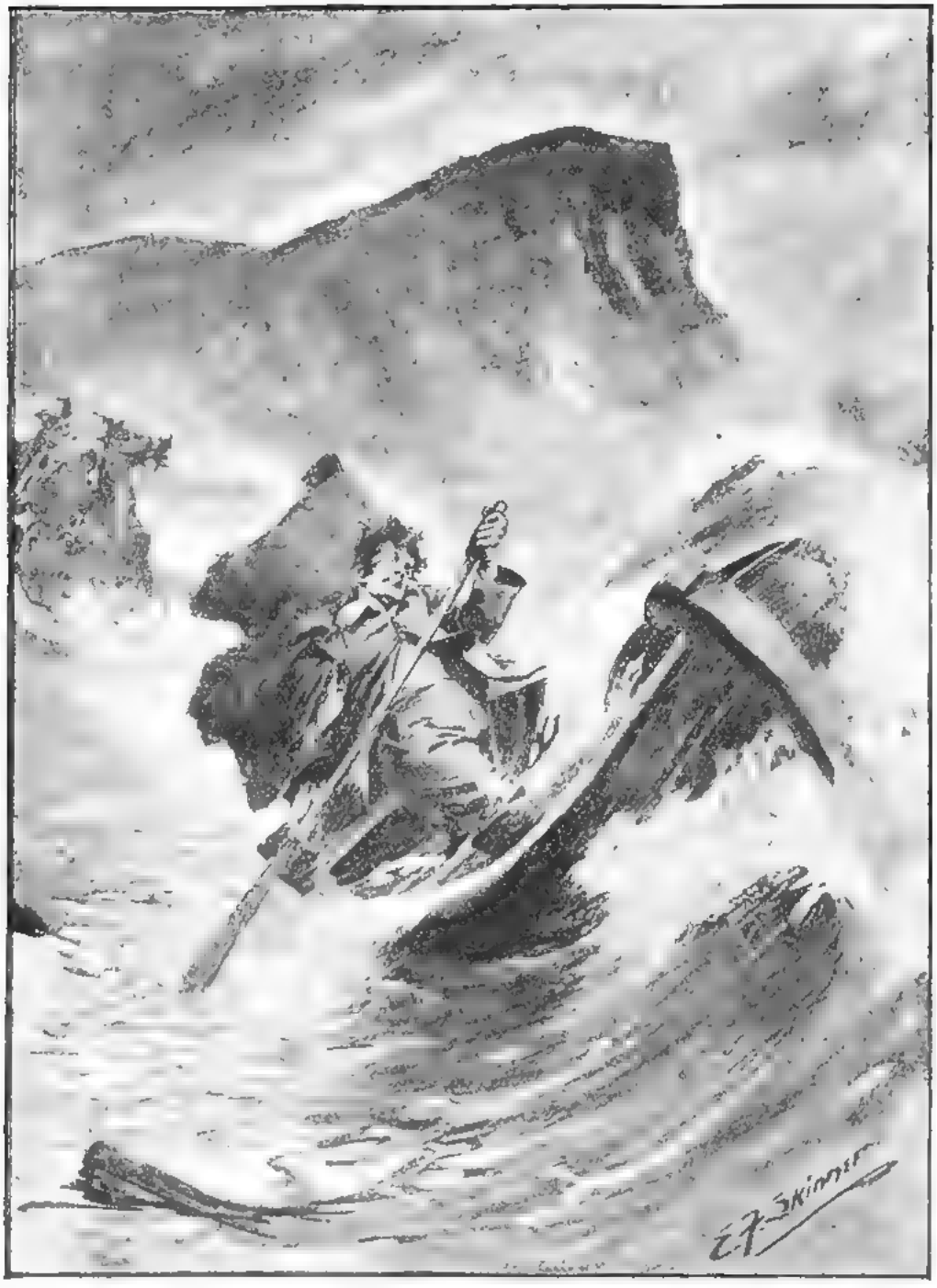
But that night, when I awoke from a feverish sleep haunted by the horror of the morning, I found my grandfather watching at my bedside, and Nanette, candle in hand, stealing with whispered caution from the room. Dear heart! scarce had my nurse left the chamber than Latour fell on his knees beside me, and, deeming I slept, offered up his prayers to God at my deliverance.

Trembling I lay, and would not for the world he knew I heard, yet when I dared I stirred, and, groping, clasped my hands around his honoured neck. But he, lifting his head from my embrace, cried out in heart-broken accents into the shadowy room, "Marie, Marie, forgive thy father as God has forgiven, Who gives me back thy child!"

Scarce was I myself once more than Latour busied himself with plans for our departure, and I, lest I should wound so loving a grandparent, must needs hide all trace of regret that the thought of leaving gave me.

So it came that our days in this dear England grew numbered. But, it being no longer necessary for my grandfather to live in secrecy, many of those disbanded Cavalier officers, who were by permission of Parliament returning in much poverty and distress to their impoverished and cruelly taxed estates, sought out the great French noble, whose sympathy for the Cause to which they had devoted themselves had been no secret.

Those poor, brave, weary gentlemen! How my heart ached for them. As for Nanette, who loaded our table with all the best for their benefit, much



TWICE DID GILES HARRISON GO FORTH IN THAT WILD FLOOD, AND TWICE DID THE WAVES REFUSE SO GUILTY A BURDEN.

Google

ado had I to prevent her wounding their pride by open offers to assist their oft ragged attire with needle and thread.

Remembering the scorn with which Latour had spoken of the English exiles, I at first suffered much uneasiness for our guests' sakes, lest my grandfather in his heart felt not the sympathy for these poor heroes his manner so admirably implied.

But I was discovering daily what a noble heart it was that Latour's pride so often hid. Albeit Nan, remembering other days, would sigh and say I alone had found the key that had opened the iron door of the proud soul.

Alas! those whom my grandfather entertained were but the fortunate of the King's servants, who, by taking the oath never again to serve against the Parliament, might thus return to house and kindred.

But for those dauntless ones, whose loyalty would but end with their lives, there could be no return; banishment beyond the seas, imprisonment, if not death, were the sentences of the victorious rebels on these brave men.

What then of Brian Carthew, truest of Cavaliers, beloved of the King? No marvel that, as the days passed and naught heard we of him, I carried a heart of lead in my bosom.

Oft in my dreams did his face, lit by the tender light of love, visit me, and again would I hear with wondering joy that declaration of his passion for myself, told to the boy he had deemed me.

With such thoughts for company I tarried one morn at my lattice, mine eyes, as ever, searching the grey road beyond, when there came my grandfather's voice calling me.

Hastening downstairs, I found Latour in much content at news from his beloved France. For, anxious at his long delay, the Queen Mother herself had demanded of the English Parliament tidings of the revered warrior of France.

In a transport of delight he embraced me.

"See," he cried, "'tis the Queen's own hand—she mentions thee by name—see thee—'*also Mademoiselle de Latour*.' Ah, my child! thou seest they forget not their old soldiers in La belle France!"

Nor was that all; a deputation of two of the most honourable of his country was on its way from London, travelling under escort of Parliament—that knew its weakness too well to quarrel with so great a neighbour—to offer in person congratulations to Latour on his safety.

But the morrow brought trouble, for my grandfather must needs vex himself at the plain and homely attire my nurse herself had fashioned for me. Such was not fit, he vowed, for Mademoiselle de Latour, in which to meet the eyes of his countrymen fresh from the elegances of a French Court.

Oh! the weary day we toiled, in hopeless search for gay attire in simple Stratton!

Till Nanette, on our return, bethought her of a poor gentlewoman, who from a life of splendour at our English Court, now lived in Stratton in retirement, near the church, and who for love of the Cause had once sought to sell her gauds, but found no market for such amongst the Puritans who peopled the pretty hillside. Thither we must go then, and much angered was I at Nanette, who had thus started us on so uncomfortable an errand.

But, dear heart! so light a task of it made this chivalrous Latour, I found embarrassment gone and myself up in a bedroom, the green bowered window of which overlooked the prettiest churchyard in the land. Here, with our hostess—so sweet a gentlewoman, I felt no shyness—did I tarry, as she displayed to me her pretty fineries.

She protested much at my grandfather's generosity, vowing that to see us was payment enough, languishing as she did for sight of loyal hearts. Sweet soul! when she heard she served none other than the great Latour, the tears swam in her eyes.

"Alas, sir!" she said tremulously, "my brother has been forced to seek shelter in your kind country."

"Madame," replied Latour, bending low before her in his courtly fashion, "rest assured, thy brother has henceforth a friend in Latour."

"Oh!" she cried in delight, a rose pink coming to her faded cheeks, "so strangely has God answered a sister's prayers."

Then into the garden we went, where the apple blossoms peeped all pink from tenderest green-leafed boughs, and took our leave of this poor lady, who had come from affluence to such sad straits for love of the King.

"Adieu," she said, through her tears. "Ah, Monsieur, assure our dear exiles they have taken our hearts with them to your kind France."

There were tears in my eyes also as I rode down the white dusty lane; alas! what was there but sorrow for all loyal hearts in this dear mad England?

Little love had I for the wearing of gay gauds when the noblest in the land lacked e'en necessities, and small patience, save for Latour's sake, had I in the contemplation of such.

So thinking, with hot cheeks, was I, when we reached the hill and came in sight of that white inn, which I ne'er passed without heartache, as I thought of that wild ride of mine, so bitter-sweet and sadly ending! Dear heart! as my shy glance flitted yearningly thitherward, I saw by

the archway a party of dust-laden Cavaliers, in the midst of which, travel-weary, the shadow of himself, was Sir Brian Carthew.

Another moment, he had caught sight of us, and the next he was at our side, bowing before me with the stately grace I had so oft recalled to mind, while Latour, his first surprise over, busied himself with courteous inquiries on Sir Brian's behalf and heartfelt commiseration at such a termination to the King's cause in the west.

Sir Brian's face grew stern as he listened. "Our chief hath nobly done his work," he said, "but the spirit of loyalty no longer exists in our army, which daily dissolves by shameless desertion. Even the best confess themselves weary of the strife, and crave for peace, though it be under the protection of Cromwell.

"As for myself," he added, proudly, in answer to Latour's question, "I ask no favours at the hands of these rebels, who, though they seize my land, shall never receive oath of mine that forbids me to serve my King."

Here I, observing all shyly apart, saw come to Latour's eyes the look that would shine there when he related those deeds of his own youth's daring. For one moment his keen glance fell upon Sir Brian's glowing face.

"Honour permits no compromise, Monsieur," he said, simply; "nevertheless, with such sentiments, I take it, you run risk in thus tarrying in England."

"As for that——" answered Sir Brian, shrugging his shoulders, and then his look sought me, who, remembering all, sat such a picture of confusion that Latour, observing, and anxious to help me to recall my lost dignity, turned to Sir Brian.

"Monsieur," he said, in his haughtiest tone, —ah me, how haughty could be Latour!—"you have yet to make the acquaintance of Mademoiselle de Latour," and with the most superb air did he present me, saying we were on the eve of our departure to France, whither I went by the King's gracious command as Mademoiselle de Latour, "and," he added, with much pride, "I trust Mademoiselle will forget in the welcome she will receive there those trials that have beset her sojourn in England."

Sir Brian Carthew bowed low.

"Mademoiselle is indeed wise to renounce so sad a country; yet forgive me, Mademoiselle," he added, "if I, as an Englishman, regret that the Cause loses so staunch an adherent as Mistress Etienne Glanvil did prove herself."

"Indeed, indeed," I cried, pleadingly, feeling he must regard me as veriest coward and turn-coat thus to shuffle name-changing into security and ease.

But all this not being quite to Latour's mind, he frowned and flicked his whip, then, bidding Sir Brian a courteous *au revoir*, rode forward.

Naught was there for me but to do likewise, and despairing in truth was the glance I cast my love in parting. Dear heart! as mine eyes fell upon him, standing bareheaded before me in the roadway, my heart leapt, for there, in the dusty beaver he held, did I behold that little posy of violets he had begged to carry as a favour of mine when first we met.

So he had not condemned me. The joy of this thought sent me forward on the wings of hope. Away, away for ever with false shame! *He* understood and still was my true knight! Oh, my love, my love! Could there be for me such bliss in this sad world?

"Etienne," said my grandfather, as we came in sight of our home that, like a bird's nest, peeped from amidst the trees on the hillside, "how strange will it appear to our noble visitors that yonder cottage is the home of Latour's grandchild. Dear child," he cried, tenderly regarding me, "dost know how great and rich a lady is this same Mademoiselle de Latour?"

Alas! was this the answer to my dream of joy? Oh, Brian Carthew, weary and travel-stained, beggared for honour's sake, landless and proud, wouldst thou still wear the violets for love of this Mademoiselle de Latour?

Dear heart! so marvelling, how long was the following day, that from golden morn merged into lengthy afternoon, in which I, heart-sick, watched the garden door that, in a corner of the white-walled garden, peeped from behind a budding lilac bush.

But nay, he came not, and what hope had I save that yesterday he wore my favour that he would ever seek my face again?

Yesterday, alas! was not to-day, neither was Etienne Glanvil Mademoiselle de Latour. Oh, my heart! Oh! that kind death might come and ease me of this pain that was half killing me! But here, through the lattice above, looked old Nanette.

"Child," said she, "the light grows dim. Come in, dear heart, and thread thy Nanny's needles." Sweet soul, no word said she of blame, that I had left her to stitch alone for hours at my new gauds.

"Nanette," said I, when the stars peeped and we might idle, "tell me a tale of some poor maid who died for love. I have a mind to hear such, and, indeed, methinks it were a happy ending, should love go unrequited."

"Now," cried Nanette, "that I should live to hear thee talk such folly. Fools die of love, 'tis true, and the world is well rid of such weaklings. Heaven forbid that I should see *thee* mope

miserable for any man; the best is not worth one heart-ache of a true maid."

But her arms were round me as she spoke, and methought she guessed somewhat, my sweet Nan.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VIOLET POSY.

BUT the following day, when I had schooled myself to at least a show of indifference, I was startled by my nurse's sudden appearance in my chamber.

"My bird," she cried, breathless, "the noble gentlemen have arrived, and the Marquis hath bid me acquaint thee."

"Dear heart," thought I, maliciously, "these French nobles shall find no lack of pride in the English Mademoiselle de Latour."

So, with Nan's assistance, I donned a gown of rich simplicity, and sought the room below.

Sweeping my curtseys with hauteur, I presently caught my grandfather's glance of proud delight upon me. Of a surety, I told myself, it was something to be rich and noble; something to be grandchild of this great Latour, and my cheeks grew pink with triumph as I listened to the compliments of the gallant French Vicomte at my side, who expressed himself truly enchanted to find in me so charming a compatriot.

"Ah, Monsieur!" I cried, naughtily, "you had then feared to find me English—who can have so maligned me?"

Dear heart! As I swept him a curtsey of laughing disdain, I looked up to meet the eyes of Sir Brian Carthew, who had entered the room unseen by me.

"DEAR LOVE, I HAVE NOW NO FORTUNE SAVE MY SWORD."

How my heart beat as he came towards me! But my first glance at his beaver found the violets gone, and away flew all my pride and haughty bearing, as with a white face I sank into a chair—like some poor butterfly caught in a storm, robbed at a breath of all its gaiety.

The courteous Frenchman, startled at my mien, bent over me with kindly solicitation. But of naught could I think save that poor posy, the absence of which from my dear love's beaver meant, I felt, his resignation of myself.

Ah, me! how long the time till I stood with him, a little apart from the rest, in the deep window, through which came the song of the birds in the garden beyond.

"Mademoiselle," he said, and I thought I had swooned of hopeless love as I listened, "I come to say good-bye."

Naught could I speak, but my head drooped. Could life hold more sorrow than this moment?

"Yet, before I go," he said, "do I return to thee that which in happier days I have dared to hold my dearest treasure—emblem of all those fond hopes which I may no longer entertain for Mademoiselle de Latour."

Dear heart! he was gone next instant, and I held in my hand the poor posy. Dazed with sorrow, I stood a moment, and so caught sight of him going slowly down the garden path.

Going!—yes, he was going. Love was going, passing out of my life for ever.

But no! I could not so endure. With but one thought I fled from the room, and by a quicker way gained the garden door before him. There, 'neath the shadowy lilac bush, I stood, with heaving bosom and clasped hands. Right up to me he came, and saw me not, and then:—

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, starting.

But no words found I, for all my full heart, as I stood with bowed head before him, barring his path to that outer world which meant for us separation.

"Mademoiselle," he said huskily, "make, I pray thee, no sport of this parting, which in height of sorrow so far outcaps my lesser griefs."

Then in desperation I raised my head.

"'Tis of this same violet posy, sir," I said, tremulously. "I have no place for it, nor do I crave it."

But he laughed bitterly.

"Nay," he cried, "'tis not possible Mademoiselle de Latour lacks a knight. Is there, then, no gay French noble within for her to so honour?"

"Alas!" I cried, "alas! is it thus you read me? Must I for ever go disguised to thee, like that poor boy who heard thy wooing, tongue-tied by cold custom?"

And in sad dignity I stepped aside.

But, with a great cry, he caught my hand.

"Love!" he cried, "dear love—forgive!"

And as I turned, startled at the passion of his tone, he snatched me into the heaven of his dear embrace.

But his first words brought sorrow.

"Sweetheart," he whispered, "dear love, good-bye. God helping me, I will yet win that which will make me fitter suitor for Mademoiselle de Latour."

But I cried out in pain: "Oh! think not of Mademoiselle de Latour—indeed—indeed, I crave naught but to share thy present fortunes."

"Dear love," said he, sadly, "I have now no fortune save my sword, small comfort for my dainty sweet. Yet since thou dost love me, fear not; trust me, dear heart, 'tis but for a time we part."

"Alas!" I cried, "I cannot bear that thou shouldst go."

But here came my grandfather's voice calling me: "Etienne, Etienne!" The sound stirred my heart strangely, bringing fresh tears to my eyes. Alas! I had forgotten Latour.

"Sweetheart," softly said my love, his hands holding mine, his dauntless gaze upon me, "our duty, by these separate paths, shall lead to true love's happy ending. Courage, sweet! Do I not know the strength of thy brave heart? Dear love, give me again the posy; when I do return it to thee, in the land thou art seeking, it will be but to take my dear love in exchange for it."

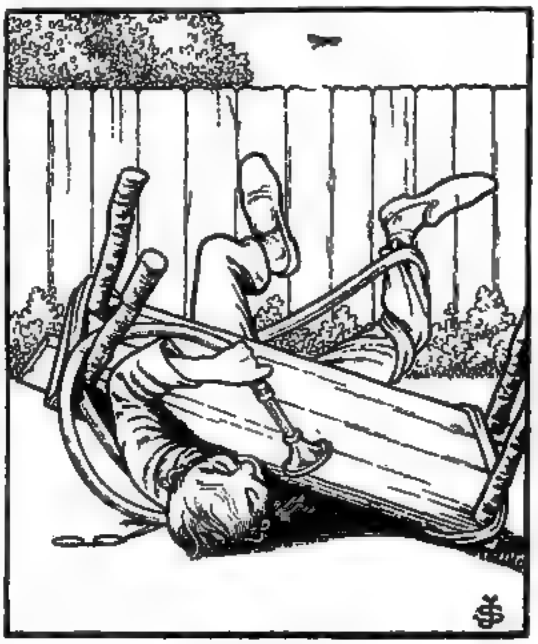
(THE END.)

YES, WE CAN.

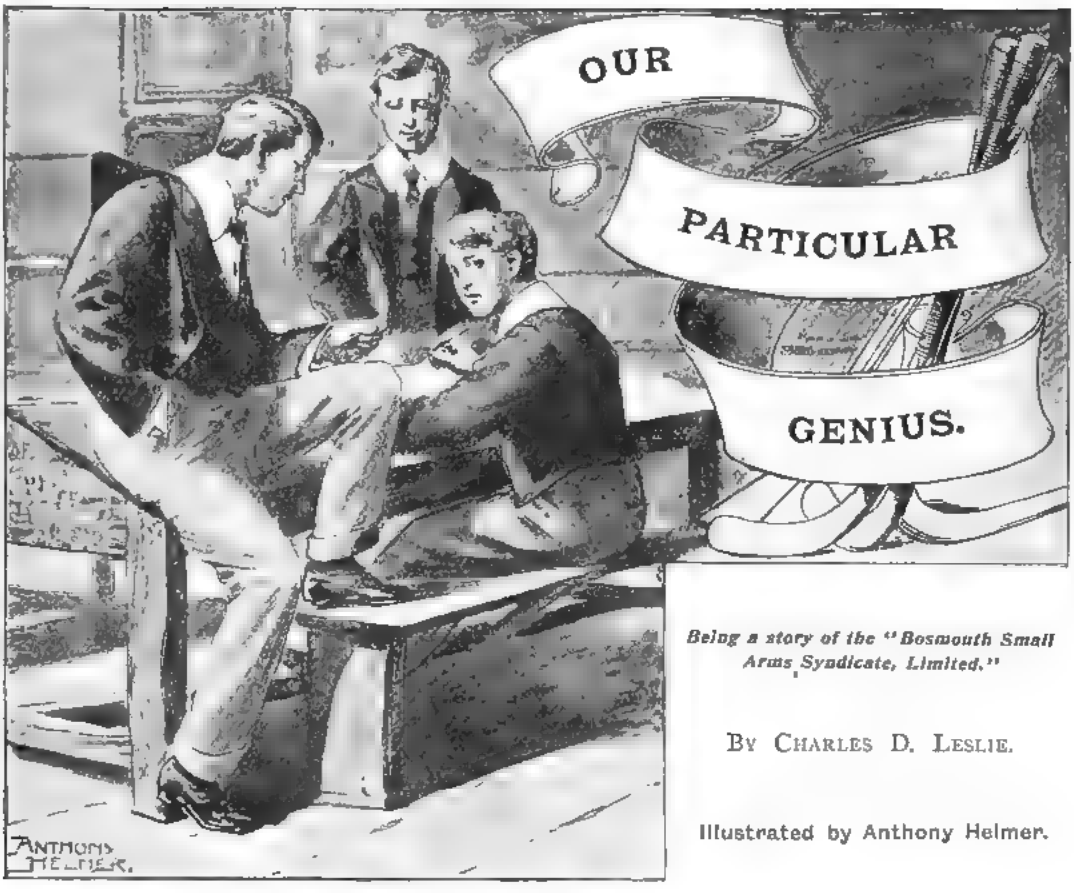
Can you imagine anything more delightful than watering one's garden on a—

calm and—

peaceful—



summer evening?



Being a story of the "Bosmouth Small Arms Syndicate, Limited."

By Charles D. Leslie.

Illustrated by Anthony Helmer.

WE had several geniuses at school. There was Crichton—the Admirable Crichton, as Mr. Hervey called him—who could do Latin verses correctly almost as easy as prose, and who could write whopping fine poetry—the *Bosmouth Gazette* once published one of his poems—and Merry, who could climb up a straight water-pipe like a monkey; and Day, who could rattle off the Kings of Israel and Judah as easy as the first eleven cricket scores. But I think Grindrod was the biggest genius of all. He was an inventive genius, and didn't trouble his head much about ordinary lessons, or he'd have been in the Upper instead of the Lower Fifth. He'd an exercise book nearly full of sketches and plans for inventions. There was a gaudy flying machine, a great deal better than any Jules Verne ever wrote about, with the mechanism sketched and planned so as it must fly when you turned a handle; and a combined umbrella and hockey stick, an awfully clever idea; and tons of other things. He was going to patent most of them when he left school, and then sell them to capitalists—that is, chaps with lots of money—and companies. His father was a stockbroker, and Grindrod would read the financial papers carefully in the holidays, and knew all about finance, and contangoes, and mortgages, and that kind of thing.

One day in the autumn term he came to me—we were rather thick, and sat next each other in class—and said, "Ormsby's got a gun—a splendid breech-loader—which he says he'll sell for ten bob. Suppose we go partners, and buy it? Then we can go rabbit shooting on half-holidays on the marshes, and maybe shoot some snipe as well."

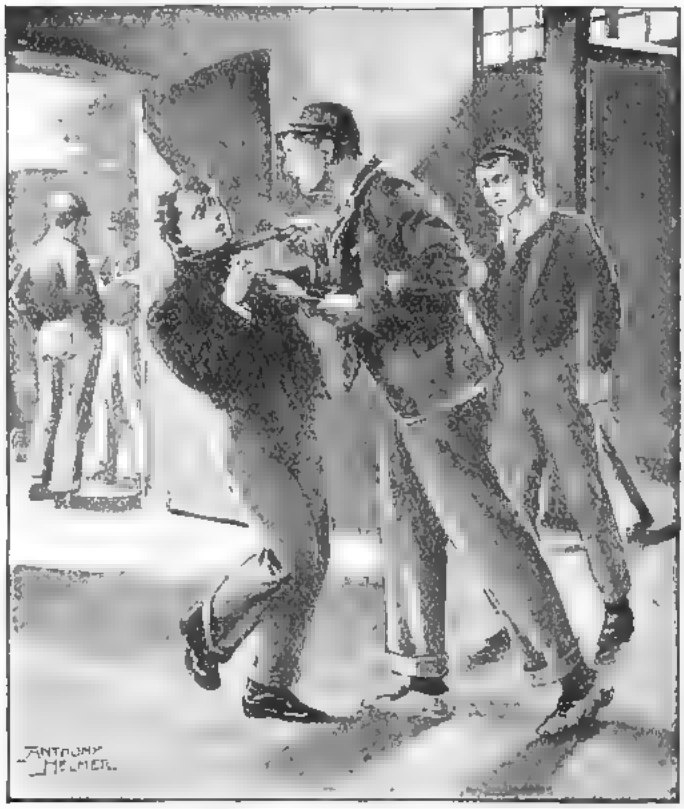
I said I'd only got half-a-crown.

"That's all I have. But look here, I've a

plan to get the rest. Day's got half-a-crown; suppose we three constitute a syndicate, pool our cash, form a trust, and engineer a financial speculation?"

"Now do talk English," says I.

He went and fetched Day, and then explained his idea. It was simply grand. Hockey was just becoming the popular game in the playground, and all the fellows were buying hockey sticks. They cost fivepence plain and sixpence coloured. A shopman in the town had a job lot of twenty-five, the sixpenny quality, which he'd offered to sell Grindrod for seven-and-six. If we bought them and sold twenty at sixpence each, that would mean ten bob—the return of our capital, and a dividend of 33⅓ per cent. If we sold the lot there would be a dividend of 66⅔ per cent., and with our increased capital we'd buy the gun.



"AND WHAT DOES THE SECRETARY SAY?"

Day and I both cottoned to the idea, and that afternoon, after school, we stayed in the class-room and drew up a prospectus, which it seems every decent syndicate company has. Grindrod said he would be chairman and treasurer, and I secretary, and Day the directorate. I wrote it out at Grindrod's dictation on the leaf of a dictation book. It was headed: *The Bosmouth Small Arms Syndicate, Limited.* (Small arms means rifles; cannon and Maxims are big arms, and as our syndicate was to buy a rifle, it was proper to call it the Small Arms Syndicate.)

"We, the undermentioned members of the syndicate, viz.: Arthur Grindrod, chairman and treasurer; William Johnson, Minor, secretary; and Gilbert Herring Day, directorate, constitute the above-mentioned syndicate.

"The capital, which is fully subscribed, is seven and sixpence, in three half-crown shares, each member holding one share. Each holder is also entitled to one hundred vendors' shares."

"What's a *vendor's* share?" asks Day at this point.

"You know what *vendo* means in Latin, don't you?" says Grindrod; "in this case it don't make any difference, but I put that in because it sounds well. The liability of each member is limited to the amount of his shares."

"Hold on!" sings out Day; "what's that mean?"

"You ass! Can't you understand it means you can't lose more than your half-crown?"

"Ass yourself!" says Day, getting in a ruck. "Of course I can't lose more than half-a-crown as I haven't got any more money. Any fool knows that."

"Keep your hair on. I'm conducting this syndicate, and everything is to be set down right and proper, like a real syndicate. If ours is a limited liability company, we must say so in the prospectus."

"The operations of the syndicate will, in the first place, be devoted to a speculation in hockey sticks, as has been already explained by the chairman to the other members."

"What comes next?" I asks.

"I think that's about all. Now we'll sign our names, and then you two give me your half-crowns."

Which we did, and I put the paper away in my desk, and then Grindrod, who had leave to go into the town, went straight away and bought the hockey sticks. They made a big bundle to carry, but he got them to the playground all right, and we locked them up in one of the gymnasium cupboards. As soon as I saw them I'd a kind of fear we'd have a trouble to sell the lot, as they were so thin. But Grindrod said they'd sell all right, and as we all had sticks of our own, it didn't matter much how thin they were. Some fellows like them so.

We went about that evening telling all the fellows of the swagger lot of hockey sticks we had for sale at sixpence each. We counted on selling a lot next day, as it was Saturday, and all the junior boarders have their sixpence a week pocket money paid on Saturday mornings. We brought them out in the half-hour in the playground before morning school, and sold six for cash, and three more to day boys on credit. Unluckily, some of the senior fellows said they'd be dear at a gift, and that put the kids off buying. There was rather a scene in the gym. after morning school. Grindrod and I were there, when Barclay came in and said the stick he'd bought didn't suit him, and we must take it back and return him his money.

Grindrod declined flatly, and said that wasn't business.

Barclay answered he didn't care a hang if it was business or not, but it was a rotten stick, and he couldn't play a bit with it; and he chucked it down, and said if Grindrod didn't give him his money back again he'd lick him; and, as he's an Upper Fifth fellow, much bigger than Grindrod or me, of course, that settled it.

But Grindrod got out of it in an awfully dignified and clever fashion, and showed what a genius he was. He said in a disputed point of such a nature the decision of the secretary must always be followed, and that Barclay must address me in the matter.

I had a silk muffler on, which the matron had ordered me to wear, as I had a bit of a cold; and Barclay turned to me and took hold of it, and tied the ends tight round my neck, and then said, holding them:—

"And what does the secretary say?"

I said I decided he was entitled to have his money back again

"I thought you'd be on my side," said he, grinning; and Grindrod shelled out sixpence and handed it over, and Barclay walked out whistling. But as it happened we didn't lose over it, because we sold the stick to Ferrier.

Johnson Major wouldn't buy one, though I asked him; he looked them over, whistling carelessly, and made me repeat twice how much we were going to make out of the speculation, and then he said he wished we might get it.

We held a board meeting that afternoon, because Day said we must declare a dividend, as he wanted a shilling at once. Grindrod said it was an absurd demand; dividends were never declared so soon, and in this case, as we hadn't got our seven shillings and sixpence back, it would mean paying them out of capital, which was shocking bad finance, and only done in shaky syndicates. It would, he said, be nothing more or less than a job.

Day said he didn't care what it was called, but he must have some money. He'd spent his sixpence buying a ball for Aspland Minor to replace one he'd lost, and he owed Vipon a shilling which he'd faithfully promised to pay on the Saturday. He appealed to me to back him up. I said I didn't see why we shouldn't divide the three shillings we had, and which the treasurer held, so Grindrod caved in, and ordered me to enter on the minutes of the syndicate that a dividend, an interim dividend, of 40 per cent. was paid on the day following the formation of the syndicate, and gave each of us a shilling. He said he thought that would probably constitute a record in the annals of syndicates.

It certainly looked rather grand when written down, and if we'd been paid for the sticks sold on credit, and sold the rest, the syndicate would have been a big success, but a crisis came before the ink was dry on the minutes. It came about like this. None of the fellows were pleased with the sticks they'd bought, and while playing that afternoon two of them broke, and, through some fellow who must have overheard us talking, it came out what we'd given for them.

There were about fifty fellows playing, boarders and day boys, most of them in the Fourth Form and Lower Fifth, with three or four Upper Fifth boys—Crosbie and Caldicott and Barclay—and a shower coming down they all took shelter in the gymnasium. Somebody calls out:—

"Let's have a trial with a judge and jury."

"I've got it," says Ferrier; "let's try Grindrod and Johnson Minor and Day for selling us these measly hockey sticks."

"Good idea!" shouts everybody, and about half of them formed a committee to look for us, and we were found, and lugged along into the gym.; and Barclay was made judge, and a jury enrolled, and all the fellows who'd bought sticks made witnesses; and Caldicott, with a rattan like Mr. Hervey's, swaggered about as usher.

All this took a long time to arrange, for there was lots of rotting; and when the preliminaries

were all settled, and Crosbie, who was prosecuting counsel, about to open the case formally, the judge looked at his watch and saw it was a quarter to six, and the tea bell rang at six.

"Gentlemen," says he, getting up, "it's a quarter to six, so we'll have to cut the speeches and the evidence, and I shall proceed to sum up right away, else we shan't have time to carry out the verdict before tea."

"Question!" shouts Denton, whose father was a lawyer. "You can't sum up yet, you mug, before the defence has been heard."

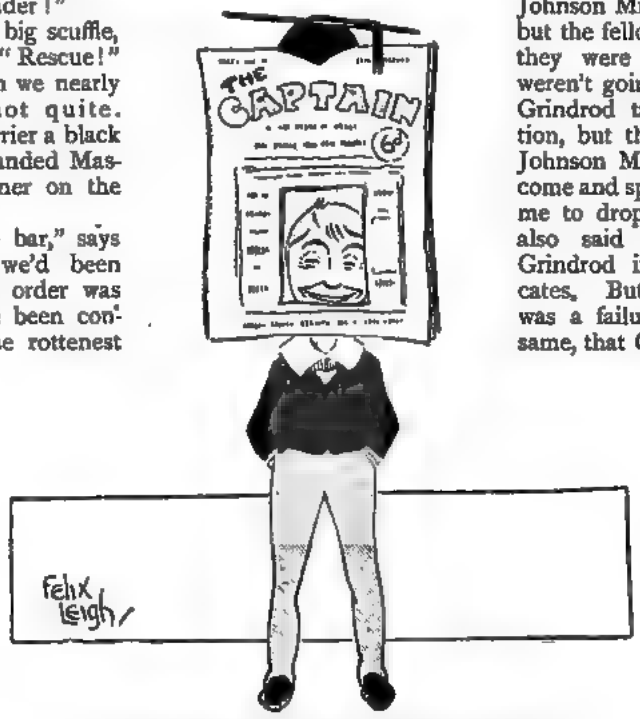
"Silence in the court!" roars Barclay. "Usher, turn out that disorderly person! Chuck him out! I'll teach him law to-morrow, and manners, too, sure as my name's Barclay! You mind me, you stuck-up six-and-eightpenny bounder!"

Then there was a big scuffle, and Denton shouted "Rescue!" and in the confusion we nearly got away. But not quite. However, I gave Ferrier a black eye, and Grindrod landed Massingham a lovely oner on the chin.

"Prisoners at the bar," says the judge, when we'd been overpowered and order was restored, "you have been convicted of selling the rottenest hockey sticks ever known in this high-class school—sticks you've bought at about threepence ha'penny each—sticks dear at three for a farthing—sticks you've had the cheek to sell for sixpence each; and six fellows have been asses enough to pay for them. The verdict of this court and impartial tribunal is, that the rest of your sticks be smashed up, and every member of the jury shall kick you."

However, the sentence wasn't carried out, for though they found our sticks and smashed them up, we managed to get into a corner and keep them off for a while, and then, luckily, Dane and Johnson Major and two other Upper Fifth boys came in.

They stopped all the nonsense, and Johnson Major behaved like a regular trump, saying if there was to be any kicking of Johnson Minor, he'd begin too; but the fellows in the jury swore they were only rotting, and weren't going to kick anybody. Grindrod talked of compensation, but that evening at prep. Johnson Major signalled me to come and speak to him, and told me to drop the business. He also said I wasn't to join Grindrod in any more syndicates. But, though that one was a failure, I think, all the same, that Grindrod is a genius.



"I HAVE JUST BEEN *LOOKING THROUGH* THE MAGAZINE, AND I FIND THAT 'THE CAPTAIN' IS STILL AHEAD."

(Extract from the letter of an occasional correspondent.)

A 'Possum Hunt "Down Under."

By Walker Hodgson.

Prefers 'possum undressed.

"No refinement of cookery or temptations of savoury sauce are lavished on the black-fellow's game," says Mr. William Senior ("Redspinner"), and certainly regarding the opossum (*Irichosurus vulpecula*) our chocolate brethren in the Antipodes would appreciate some verses we remember by the American, Paul Laurence Dunbar, of which the first lines run as follows:—

Ef dey's anyting dat riles me,
An jes gits me out o' hitch,
Twell I want to tek my coat off,
So's to r'ar an' t'ar an' pitch,
Hit's to see some ig'nant white man
'Mittin' dat owdacious sin—
W'en he want to cook a 'possum,
Tekin off de 'possum's skin.

Just so! The noble savage "down under" prefers 'possum *un*dressed as a roast, and would not thank you in the least for any garnishing.

Our first experience of 'possum as an item in the bush menu was, of course, preceded by a hunt for the little marsupial—a pretty, silver-grey creature, about the size of a six-months-old cat, and resembling somewhat our pine-martin when seen upon the eucalyptus branches, or, as the familiar phrase has it, "up a gum-tree."

The phalangers (*Phalangerida*) are a large family found everywhere in Australia. They inhabit the trees, and, like most of the marsupials, seek their food at night. They are usually called opossums, but are very different from the genuine opossum of America. Just as the latter are the most perfect and most intelligent of all marsupials, so the Australian opossums are the most perfectly organised of all Australian marsupials. They are, so to speak, the apes of the marsupials, in that they feed on fruit, but are able to live on insects and birds' eggs; have a prehensile tail and a movable thumb, which almost converts their feet into hands.

"Yanky"—(*Yanky* is an aboriginal word for fig)—"Yanky," who was civilised to the extent of half a dozen "white" words, made it plain to us that 'possum was abundant in the neighbourhood we were visiting, and could readily be caught after daylight.

"When um light gone, 'possum come," said the native, most musically and metrically.

All we required was our gun and dog, both of which were handy, though we cannot claim that "Auld Reekie," as we called the latter, was a master craftsman as a hunter, for he was as new a chum as ourselves. However, "Yanky" was sure "Auld Reekie" would acquit himself well, so when the sun dropped we set out from our camp for the bush on the higher land. But the dog proved of little use as a pointer, and the black fellow himself had to do the finding for us—a matter he attended to with marvellous keenness. He seemed to know just which tree held its 'possum as well as the musk rat knows what kind of weather is coming. Soon we reached the upland scrubs—which by the way are as characteristic of Australia as are the steppes of Tartary, the prairies of America, or the deserts of Africa, of these respective countries—and here we came upon a couple of "Yanky's" relatives, who possessed a good specimen of the native dingo. They were seated at a fire, and had evidently just finished gorging some sort of game, so were in a condition of extreme laziness, though, for the matter of that, these lords of the boomerang are rarely in any other state.

"Yanky" proposed borrowing their dog, and in his own tongue asked for it, but "There isn't such a thing," was plainly written in their countenances, and the loan was not negotiated. The fact is, there had recently been some feud between these natives. "Yanky" was no longer a naked bush wanderer like his brethren. He was civilised now—that is to say, he was associated with the white man in his hunting, and

was, consequently, the victim of great jealousy. So we got no dingo help.

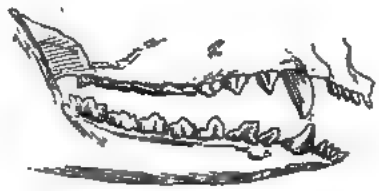
It was not long, however, before our dusky companion espied the little furred fellow we sought, and desired the action of our pea-rifle, the most suitable weapon to use if you are hunting for skins.

"Yanky" indicated a dark object upon the bough of a blue gum, saying, "Yonner um 'possum; you shoot." Our discernment of the animal though (or maybe we ought to refer to our shooting) must have been feeble, for no 'possum fell to us from *that* bullet discharge, and doubtless we received a black mark in the mental summing-up of the aboriginal regarding our skill with the gun. But when "Yanky" had told us that there were plenty of opossums after sundown he had spoken with knowledge, and in less than two minutes, following this non-success of ours, he spotted another, and directed our visual attention to it. This time, because our eyes had become accustomed to what little light the young moon gave, we brought the creature to our feet, though after receiving the shot it clung by its tail for a few minutes to the branch of the eucalypt. But an extremely vexatious thing happened now. The dingo of "Yanky's" unamiable relatives had followed us unobserved, and no sooner did the marsupial reach the ground than this claim-jumping cur burst upon it from behind us, and, snatching it from beneath our very eyes, disappeared with it into the scrub. "Yanky" was furious, and his anger was by no means allayed when the loud laughter of his enemies—expressive of congratulations—made us aware that their hound had done a smart bit of stalking for them. And what could be thought of "Auld Reekie" in these ignoble circumstances? Well, if we can at all translate the look of "Yanky's" countenance for a clue, "Auld Reekie" should have been thoroughly ashamed of himself.

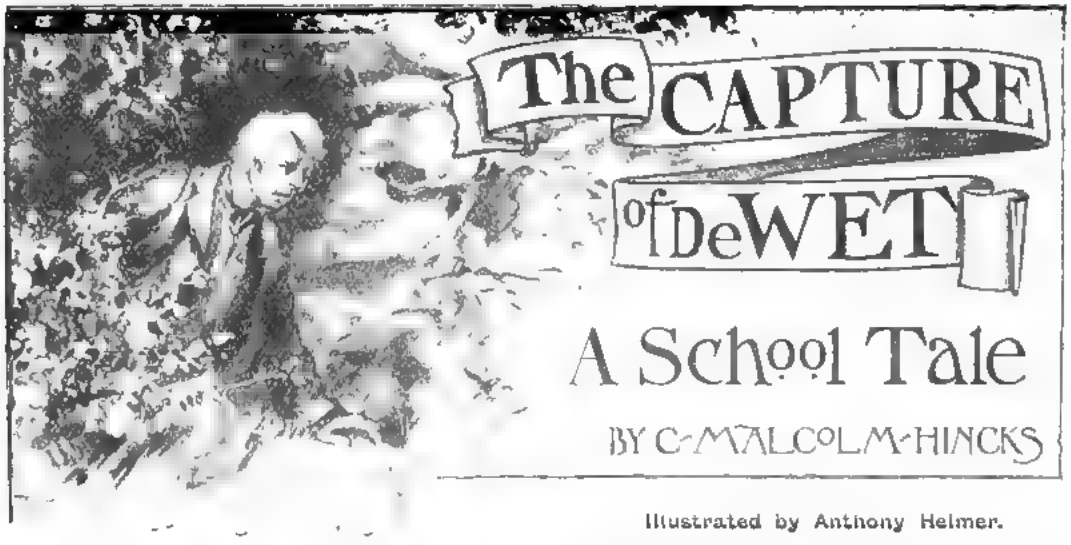
'POSSUM "UP A GUM TREE."

The opossum makes a delightful pet if you catch one young, and we have seen one seated upon the shoulder of a lady during her piano-exercise in a sheep-station parlour. Another we saw occupied the same privileged position while accompanying its owner out shopping in the main street of Perth, Western Australia.

If you shoot 'possum in plenty, why, your gain may be considerable, for the fur is greatly prized in the rich and fashionable markets here at home.



TEETH OF THE POSSUM.



The CAPTURE of DeWET

A School Tale

BY C. MALCOLM HINCKS

Illustrated by Anthony Helmer.

I.

"ULLOA, wot's that? Sounds like them collegers!"

The speaker was a tall, ungainly looking youth, lying full length in a sort of natural cave thoroughly hidden by the green brushwood that grew at its entrance. A peculiar boy was this cave-dweller. The son of a poor woman in the village, who, by slaving at the wash-tub, made just enough to live upon, he had never regularly attended the village school, but preferred to be roaming about the country, and now, at the age of sixteen, when he should have been a help to his widowed mother, he was seldom at home, but lived no one knew how. Now and then he would appear in the village, and then would disappear, and, by a peculiar coincidence, so would a loaf of bread, or any other light article that happened to be unguarded at the time.

As for the fellows at St. Vedas (the big school near the village) they were his sworn enemies, and had recently christened him De Wet, owing to his marvellous power of evading capture. He was continually at war with the St. Vedas boys, but despite many narrow escapes he proudly boasted that he had never been captured.

Now, as he heard his great enemies approaching, he peered cautiously out of the bushes into the lovely green dell, looking its best in fresh spring foliage; but the beauty of the place had no attraction for De Wet, his gaze being fixed on a good-looking, well-built boy who sprang into the opening.

"That's 'All," he muttered to himself, and drew back.

"Come on, you fellows," yelled Hall; "this is the very place for it."

Three others then came up with a large hamper, and put it down in the place Hall indicated.

"Now we must go and get some wood for a fire."

"Awful fag," grunted Jenkins, a stout fellow.

"Oh, you shut up, Tubby! Why, I believe you're tired already. Look here, Braddon, you and Tomkins go down to old Jones's place and get some wood, and I'll go to the brook for water, and we'll leave that lazy beggar in charge of the grub."

To this Jenkins agreed with alacrity, and, on finding himself alone, and knowing that his companions would be gone at least a quarter of an hour, he settled himself on the green bank for a doze. Soon after, a face peered out from the bushes, and then, it being palpable that the guardian of the hamper was asleep, the thin figure of De Wet appeared.

"This is the fat 'un as allus 'as a nap," he observed. "Fancy em comin' so near my cave! I'll teach 'em ter be more kerful in the futcher."

He advanced to the hamper, and attempted to pick it up.

"Too 'eavy," he muttered. "I must take one at a time." Then, while Jenkins slumbered, this ingenious youth quickly transferred the contents of the luncheon hamper to his cave. At last, when all was safely stored away, he dived into one of his voluminous pockets and produced a short stumpy pencil and a dirty piece of paper. Carefully spreading the paper out on the ground, he scrawled on it: "*i thanks the collegers for mi diner d wet.*"

Putting this into the basket and closing the lid, he regained his cave just before Hall and his companions came up.

"I'll be hanged if that duffer Jenkins isn't

asleep!" said Braddon, noticing the fat youth's recumbent form.

"Now, you lazy beggar, wake up and come and help us get lunch!"

"Have I been asleep?" said Jenkins; "I feel jolly hungry, anyway."

"All right, then; you undo the hamper while we make the fire."

This he began eagerly to do; lifting the lid he glanced inside, and, as he did so, gasped in astonishment, while a sickly smile overspread his round face.

"Have you fellows been having a joke with me?" he demanded.

"Joke!—what do you mean?" said Hall, who was on his knees endeavouring to kindle the wood.

"Grub's gone," said Jenkins miserably.

"Grub gone," they echoed in amazement, and then, on looking in the basket, they discovered De Wet's short note.

We will draw a veil over what followed. Suffice it to say that the unfortunate Jenkins had to bear the brunt of their rage as they returned to the school, their picnic spoilt. Great was the indignation expressed when the three unfortunates told their tale to the rest of the school, and many were the vows of vengeance made.

But before the term was over the school was to feel again De Wet's power, for this was felt to be the *last* straw.

Paindon, the captain of St. Vedas, had sent Billy, the boot-boy of the school, into the town to fetch a dozen cakes that he had ordered the previous day. After procuring the cakes Billy was about to return to the school when he met his bosom friend, the butcher's boy, who with cheerful indifference to the anxiety of the neighbouring cooks and his master's wrath on his return to the shop, proposed a game of marbles, and Billy, nothing loth, readily assented.

While engaged in this interesting pastime, who should appear on the scene but the redoubtable De Wet, who quickly observed Billy's open basket. Having a few coppers about him, he went into the confectioner's and demanded "a bag of stale pastry," and the bag he received in exchange for his twopence bore a close resemblance to that reposing in Billy's basket outside.

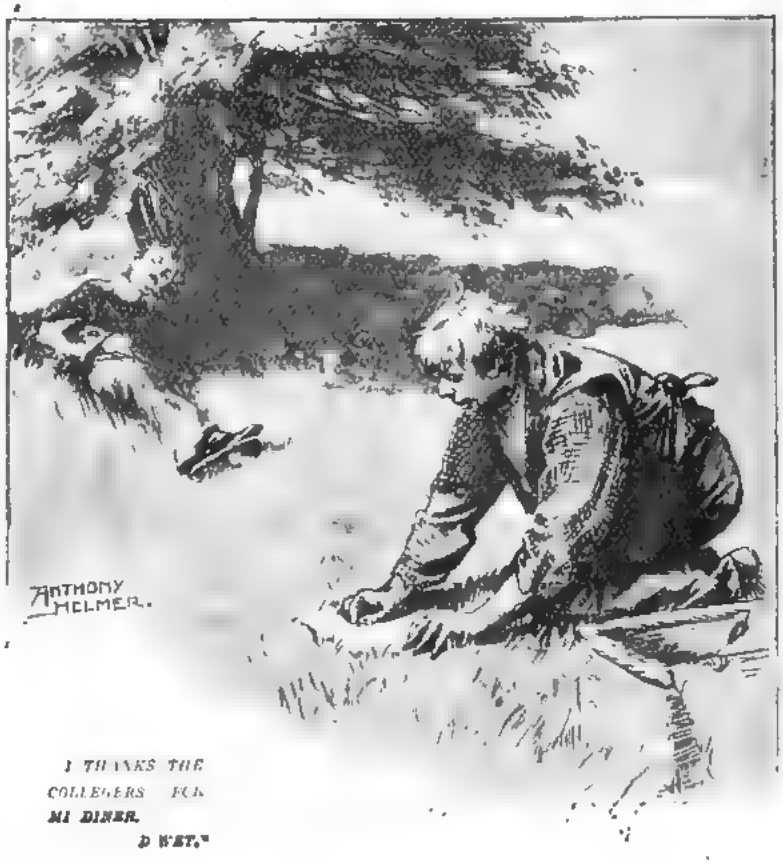
Leaving the shop he stole quietly up and, substituting his bag for Paindon's, stole swiftly away again.

"Exchange 'aint no robbery," he chuckled to himself, as he made for his cave.

The unfortunate Billy discovered nothing wrong, and having been victorious in the game went cheerfully whistling to the school, and gave the bag to the captain's fag, who only discovered the change when about to arrange the pastry on the table. All guessed the marauder's identity.

When the school heard of it great was their wrath that the captain should have suffered from De Wet; it was intolerable; had the King himself been robbed it could not have caused more excitement.

The luckless Billy admitted having seen De



I THANKS THE
COLLEGERS FOR
MI DINER.
D WET."

Wet, but said he had no reason to suspect him of tampering with the bags.

De Wet went on his way in triumph; three Fifth Form fellows had seen him on the last day of the term, and had attempted to catch him, but had been easily out-distanced after a long chase in the woods. As for De Wet, in the secure hiding of his cave, he chuckled greatly, and looked forward to plenty of amusement with the "collegers" next term. Verily, pride goeth before a fall!

II.

BRADDON and Hall were the sole occupants of the large playground of St. Vedas. It was the first afternoon of the term, and they had arrived by an earlier train than that by which the majority of their schoolfellows came.

After exchanging their toppers for caps, they had wandered out into the playground in search of something to pass away the time until the other fellows appeared, and had just settled this interesting question by deciding to go for a swim, when a boy entered the school gates and walked towards them with the unmistakable air of a new fellow.

Braddon stuck his hands into his pockets, and with all the dignity of the Lower Fourth stared at the fresher, saying briefly:—

"New kid?"

"Yes."

"Name?"

"Ashcroft."

"How did you come?" was the next question.

"By the 2.15, and as I knew I was early I told them to send my things up, and walked."

"Ah, that's how we must have missed you!" said Hall. "We were in the front of the train and we cabbed it here; the others have not come yet, and we were just going for a dip. Can you swim?"

"A little," Ashcroft replied.

"Come on, then," said Braddon. "I'll lend you a cap; just run in and change your hat for it."

Soon all three, with their towels over their shoulders, were on the way to the river, and by the time they arrived were firm friends. Quickly undressing, they stood on the bank ready for a plunge.

"We'll give you a start and race you down to the boat-house," said Braddon to Ashcroft.

"All right," was the reply, and with a neat dive he was in the river and swimming with a powerful over-arm stroke in the direction indicated.

The others were in almost directly afterwards, but came to the winning point yards behind Ashcroft, although they were by no means poor swimmers.

"You beggar!" gasped Braddon, as they sat on the bank resting. "I thought you said you could only swim a little."

"Well," said Ashcroft, simply, "I have lived by the sea all my life, and my father said I could swim fairly."

"I should think you could," said Hall. "Don't you think so, too, Brad?"

"Rather," said that gentleman, as he lay panting on the grass.

After their rest they again dived in, and were thoroughly enjoying themselves, when Ashcroft, happening to look towards the place where they had left their clothes, saw a lanky, dilapidated youth quickly bundling them together.

"Hi, you fellow! Drop those!" he yelled.

At his shout Braddon also looked, and at the sight a blank look overspread his usually cheerful countenance.

"De Wet," he said, in a miserable voice.

"I don't care who he is," said Ashcroft, as he scrambled up the bank. "I'm after him."

"You'll never catch him!" shouted Hall. "He can outrun any fellow in the school; that's why we call him De Wet."

But Ashcroft was already in full run after this celebrity, who, seeing that he was pursued, had quickly gathered up the clothes and was tearing across a field at a furious pace. The chase that followed is a matter of school history. Braddon and Hall soon saw that Ashcroft was a very good runner, and, in spite of the start that the speedy De Wet had got, was beginning to gain on him, so much so, in fact, that that discreet youth began to ease himself of his load of clothing. First he dropped a coat, then a waistcoat; but, as this did not avail him much, he began to quickly relieve himself of the remainder of his burden, amongst which was a pair of boots. This was a fatal mistake on his part, for, with a hardly perceptible pause in his run, Ashcroft picked up one of the boots and threw it with such sure aim that it hit the flying De Wet on the head. Had he been anyone but a British yokel, it would have knocked all the running out of him, for that day at least. As it was, the redoubtable one wavered, and then, finding all chance of escape by flight impossible, as a last resource turned and faced his pursuer.

For a moment they both paused, and, panting for breath, glared savagely at each other. Then, with a rush, Ashcroft sprang at his opponent, hoping to bear him to the ground, but the wily De Wet was not to be caught so easily, for, with a quick turn, he caught Ashcroft by the neck. Then, closing with each other, they com-

menced to swing backwards and forwards, each exerting his utmost strength in his endeavour to throw his enemy.

Then, slowly but surely, the superior strength and training of Ashcroft began to assert itself, and, seizing a favourable opportunity, he caught the thief beneath the arms, and with all his might threw him with a crash to the ground. Then, despite the other's struggles, he calmly sat on De Wet's head until Braddon and Hall came running up.

"You pick up the clothes, Hall, while Braddon helps me take him back and give him a ducking."

Hearing these kind plans for his future, De Wet began to struggle violently.

"Look here, my lad," said Ashcroft, as he took a boot from Hall, "if you don't keep quiet I'll give you a crack over that skull of yours which will knock all the kicking out of you."

The captive promptly ceased struggling, but whined piteously for mercy the whole way back to the river.

When they got there they found a crowd of fellows gathered round Hall's cap, which had dropped out of the bundle as the thief started; they swarmed round Ashcroft asking him whom he had got, and, when Braddon explained, the cheers they gave Ashcroft woke the echoes. They then hustled De Wet towards the river.

"I can't swim," he shrieked. "You'll drown me."

"Oh, no, we won't," they said. "We're not going to chuck you into the river, but into the brook."

Now the brook was a wide ditch full of black mud and dirty green water, which branched off from the river and was only a few feet deep.

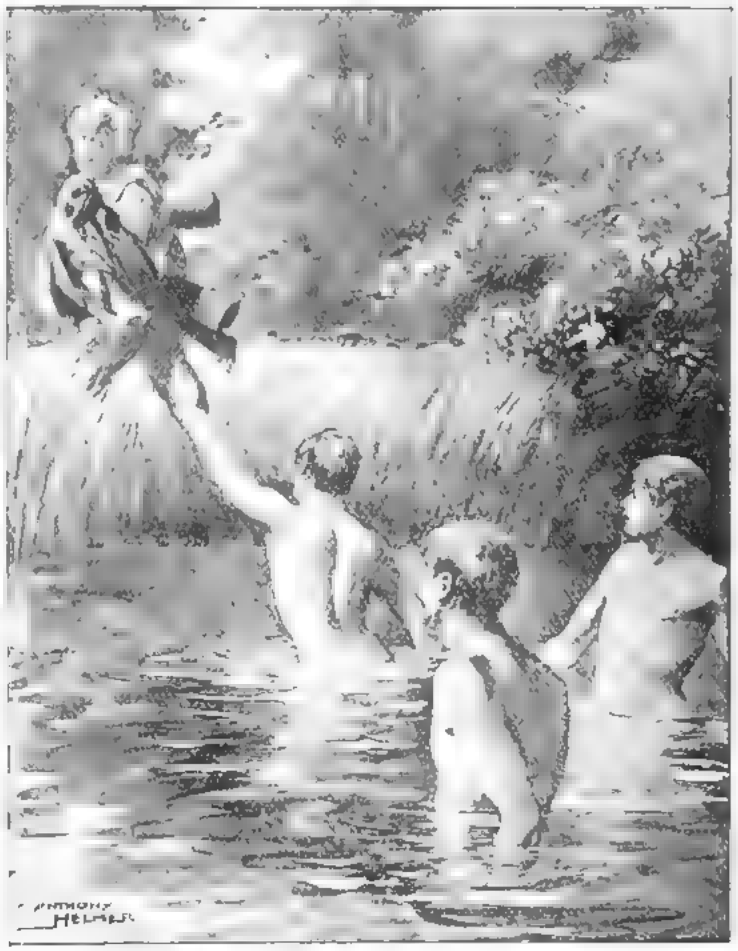
Six fellows now got hold of the captive and started to swing him in the air.

"Steady," said Ashcroft. "One, two, three—*and away!*"

There was a mighty splash, followed by a vision of legs and arms—and then a miserable figure, simply covered with mud and weed, emerged on the opposite bank.

The fellows stood ready, expecting a volley of stones and abuse.

But the triumph of De Wet was over; he had been caught—his record was broken. In a dejected manner he walked slowly away without a word, and was never seen in the neighbourhood again.



"HI, YOU FELLOW! DROP THOSE!" HE YELLED.

As for Ashcroft, he became the hero of the hour, and when, in later years, as captain of St. Vedas, he won the mile, and the fellows had cheered him until they were hoarse, a lady said to her son:—

"How popular your captain must be!"

"Yes," was the ready reply, "but you should have heard them by the river when he caught De Wet."

Whereat the good lady marvelled greatly.

THE FREE WHEEL AND ITS FUTURE.

THOSE of you who have had a monthly chat with me in this corner of ours from the very outset, will remember that I long ago pronounced emphatically in favour of the free wheel. I believed in it from the moment I saw it first applied to the modern safety—for, as you know, it is a very old device as fitted to tricycles—and, after various trials with somewhat numerous varieties of it, I have seen no reason to modify the opinion originally formed—that is to say, not in essentials. I still think the ratchet class of devices superior to those embodying the clutch principle. I still think effective ball races essential, and that those designs which do not provide them are something short of efficiency. I still think rim brakes the best for the purpose of controlling a free wheel machine, and I still would emphasise

THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TWO OF THEM,

one on each wheel, so that if one should go out of order at a moment of emergency, there may always be the other to fall back upon.

But in certain minor matters I have learnt more than I knew when I wrote upon the subject last. I then objected to what has come to be known as an "any-point" brake —that is to say, a pedal-actuated brake so contrived that it can be put on by backing the pedal at any point in the circle of revolution. The view was a cautious one, and was expressed largely in the interests of novices who cycled, but who had not previously free-wheeled. The danger to them lay chiefly in the inherent instinct to back the pedals at all moments of crisis. Many of the earlier pedal-acted brakes were of a nature to go on so suddenly that any rider accidentally or involuntarily applying one would be so unprepared for the consequences that he would in all probability

BE TREATING HIMSELF TO A "HEADER."

It was partly for this reason that I thought a two-point brake the best. Partly, also, there came in the consideration of coasting with feet at rest, and the dangers that might arise from a jerk caused by passing over an unexpected stone. All stones and other unevennesses are in this sense unexpected when one is riding in the dark. Now most of the good two-point brakes are arranged to go on as the result of the pushing back of either pedal at a point a short segment to the rear of the lowest portion of the circle. The correct style of free wheel coasting is with the two feet on about the same horizontal level — something like the position when one is sliding upon ice—and not with one foot up and one down, like a roosting stork. Hence it follows that a rider coasting correctly might sustain a pretty sharp accidental shock without either foot being jerked so far as to involuntarily lock the brake.

I use the word "lock" advisedly, because when I wrote with such caution as I used on the last occasion,

I HAD IN MIND A TERRIBLE BRAKE,

which had just been submitted to me for inspection. It would go on with the smallest back-pedalling impulse, almost at a touch. Once on, it would almost certainly skid the wheel, and most of my strength was required to get it off. This latter could only be achieved by very vigorous forward pedalling; and, mark you, this vigour could with difficulty be mustered, when the force of momentum of

one's own body was tending to carry one over the handle-bars, so that one's weight could not be properly utilised in pedal pressure. I had dangerous devices of this class before me when I roundly pronounced against the whole crowd of any-point brakes. Since then an enormous number of inventions have been offered to the public, and many distinct advances have been made. One of them has only come under my notice quite recently, but I am so well pleased with it in theory that I have determined to give it a lengthy trial. It is called the

"UNIVERSAL" AUTOMATIC COASTER AND BRAKE.

It hails from the United States, as any practised eye could detect at the first glance, and for neatness, lightness, and apparent business-like efficiency, it seems to embody most of the virtues that one looks for in a good free-wheeling and braking device combined. The chief agents for it in this country are Messrs. Markt & Co., of 20, Chapel Street, Wilton Street, London, E.C.—a firm long identified with the importation of good American novelties and cycle accessories. Those of my readers who live in the Midland counties, or in Lancashire or Yorkshire, may obtain information from the chief agent for these regions—Mr. B. E. Dickinson, Toledo Works, Aston Brook Street, Birmingham.

In speaking of the merits of this invention, I must emphasise at the outset my confirmed preference, on purely mechanical grounds, for rim brakes as compared with hub brakes. Inasmuch as the one under discussion is a hub brake, it falls, in my view, something short of the ideal. But that having been premised, I have thus far nothing but good wishes to offer it.

THE QUESTION OF WEIGHT IS NOT, OF COURSE, OF THE HUGE IMPORTANCE

which cycle manufacturers and dealers tried to make it a few years ago. But it is still of some importance, especially in a day when the refinements of cycling convenience and luxury have led to the addition of almost innumerable knacky accessories to the machine. Now, in point of weight the automatic coaster very distinctly scores. Its dead weight on my spring balance is 2lbs. 4ozs.; and remember that it is destined to replace an ordinary substantial back wheel hub, and to dispense with the necessity of a pair of strong front fork foot-rests. That is the way of looking at the case when the conversion of a captive wheel to a free is in contemplation. But when the merit of lightness is considered as between this and various other forms of free wheel, we must, of course, remember the weight of the back rim brake. This is all saved by the present device, for there is a powerful brake applicable inside the rear hub.

The hub is not large enough to look ungainly, although

ITS PROPORTIONS ARE NECESSARILY SOMEWHAT GENEROUS

in order to afford housing room for the ingenious mechanism concealed within. It consists of twenty or thirty parts, if the balls be included in the enumeration, and sufficient room is allowed for every component to be made large enough and strong enough to do its work. The forward drive is instantaneous, and the curious clutches by which this merit is attained go quite as instantaneously out of action the moment pedalling ceases. The freedom of the wheel can thus be enjoyed at all moments when its advantages are desired. While this is so there is still a possibility of applying the brake practically instantaneously, and yet there is hardly any danger of its going on when that would be dangerous. This is because the amount of "back-lash" allowed for is equal to about an eighth of a revolution of the crank, so that it is extremely unlikely that any chance unevenness in the road will be sufficient to jerk any experienced rider to such an extent as to cause him to inadvertently apply the brake. When he puts it on deliberately it is very powerful, and its method of release is admirable. Here you have a brake which can be gradually "fed" on—a virtue I spoke of in an old article on the subject of brakes as being indispensable to the perfect brake—and yet, however hard on it ultimately is,

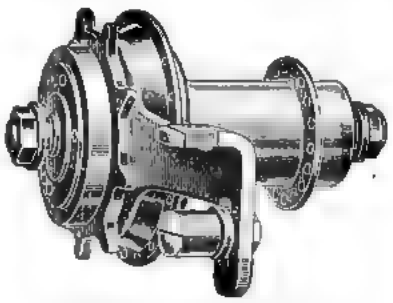
YOU HAVE AN INSTANTANEOUS AND AUTOMATIC RELEASE,

which throws the wheel free again at once.

On the whole, it is as neat a thing as I have ever seen, but I feel bound to discount this eulogy by saying that for the present I only speak of it as a theorist, and that I am still convinced, as I have said before, that a rim brake is better than one which acts at the hub, where leverage is very considerably less, and where it is consequently necessary to exert a much greater wrenching strain upon the spokes in order to obtain the desired retarding effect upon the machine. With this, as with all other brakes, the art of using it to the greatest advantage consists in applying it as gradually as circumstances will permit. There are, of

course, emergencies in which it may be necessary to clap it on at full pressure at once; but unless this is absolutely required by the exigencies of the moment, it should never be done. The feeding-on process is the most advantageous. In this way a long coast may be achieved at a most exhilarating speed and in perfect safety.

Of course, there are plenty of brakes which can be fed on with care and graduation. I named a number of good brakes in an article on the subject some time ago, and other brakes have from time to time been recommended since. Similarly, it must not be supposed by any who have not seen former articles of this series that there are no other good free wheels than the one I have been talking about. There are many. In fact, you could hardly name a firm of repute that will not to-day supply an excellent one if asked to. You can trust any of the really tip-top firms to give you a good free wheel and adequate brake-work. The Swift, the Singer, the Sunbeam, the Royal Enfield, the Rover, the Rudge-Whitworth, the Elswick, and a host of others that might be catalogued, are all the names of stuff upon the makers of which you can absolutely depend. Then there are devices such as those of Messrs. Riley & Haigh, of Manchester, and of the Bradbury people, of Oldham, both of which allow of the wheel to be made free, or to be kept permanently captive should the rider so desire. Much is to be said for an arrangement of this kind in the case of a cyclist who is timid about trying a free wheel. There are instances in which riders have been induced to make the change, and have, after a period of perseverance, come to the conclusion that the free device is beyond their appreciation and enjoyment. Such cases are well met by the class of inventions of which the Bradbury "free wheel at will" is an admirable type. My belief is, however, that most who experiment with such an invention will before long decide to keep the wheel set permanently free. I have before me the new season's catalogue of the New Premier cycles. These must certainly be added to the list given above. The makers of them supply sound machines, ranging from a boy's mount at £8 10s., and a girl's at £9, to tricycles at over £20. Their best bicycles are £21, but the Royal roadster at £16 16s., with £2 extra for a good free wheel on the ratchet principle, is a splendid thing. There are in the price list a few other extras which are optional, but from among which I should recommend the purchaser to select a gear-case, if he is having one of the cheaper mounts not so fitted.



"UNIVERSAL" AUTOMATIC COASTER AND BRAKE.

A friend of mine tells of a splendid downrush he once enjoyed in the Engadine, which extended to nearly thirty miles. It is true that

HE HAD TWO DAYS OF PUSHING

to get the tandem, on which his wife and he were touring, up to the requisite altitude from which this could be enjoyed; but he told me that the experience was almost worth a week of such trudging. I have never had so long a coast myself, but I know one favourite bit of unbroken downhill which for three miles is as smooth as a billiard table, and when fitted with really good brake-work I enjoy dropping down it in eight minutes. The thing is perfectly safe if you keep your head cool. Your eyes are far ahead, eager to anticipate by as large a margin of time as possible any danger or difficulty that may arise. You gauge the acuteness of each bend or turning, and arrange to arrive at it at just such a modified rate of speed as will allow you to round it without too risky an amount of inward lean. At times when you see the course quite clear and straight you release the brake-work altogether, but even then you have, if you are wise,

TWO FINGERS ON THE BRAKE-LEVER AND ONE ON THE BELL,

so that with whatever unlooked-for eventuality you may be by chance confronted, no one can accuse you of not exercising proper care.

I never rush in this way through good scenery that is new to me, nor would I advise anyone else to do so. It seems like throwing away a golden opportunity. But on an old familiar hill I know of few delights to equal it. It is for this reason that I am one of those who believe that the free wheel has not only come to stay, as the saying is, but that it is destined to become universal for all road work. Many have roundly declared that it must of necessity be absolutely useless on the racing track; but even here I do not think that their logic goes far enough. No racing man who rode a free wheel could retard himself as much by faulty pedalling as he can

with a fixed wheel. It is true that in either case it is possible for him to work against himself by pressing on the rising pedal. But the difference is this: if this action is carried to its extreme it will bring a fixed wheel to rest, whereas in the case of the free wheel it only results in cutting off the driving force, the onward momentum being still retained by the machine and rider.

One final word as to the misuse of the free wheel.

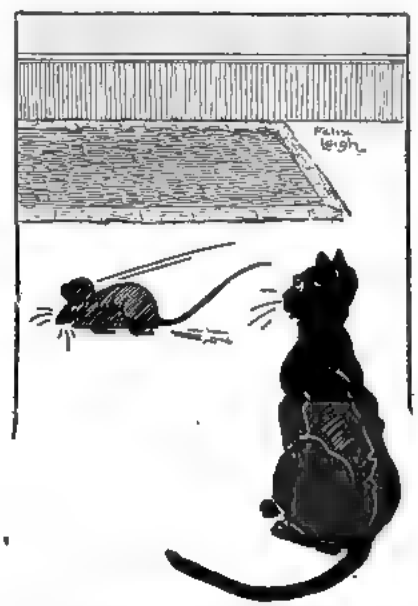
RIDERS OUGHT NOT TO "SHOW OFF" WITH IT.

There is, no doubt, a temptation to announce to the whole street that you are possessed of the up-to-date thing, but that, after all, is somewhat childish. The habit of giving two or three pedal strokes and then sailing for a dozen yards not only fails to impress the onlooker, but positively irritates him. At the same time, it tends to rob the rider of that facility of even, light, and regular pedalling by which alone the best results can be obtained. It is all right to free the wheel when the scarcely perceptible bits of decline are encountered, the whereabouts of which in his own district every free-wheeler has learnt to locate. But it is not proper to free the wheel simply to show that you are able to do so, and the excessive use of this delightful option should be reserved for such glorious downrushes as I have referred to.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Elsie (NOTTINGHAM).—If you like your brother's two men friends, and if your parents are agreeable, there is not the slightest reason why you should hesitate to take rides with them. No wonder you didn't find it in the etiquette book. Publications of the kind belong to an age when there was no glorious pastime with the freedom of cycling as its attribute, and I hope they may either reform or be relegated to a forgotten limbo. **Miss K.** (GREENOCK).—You will not find that cycling will in any way interfere with your piano playing, unless, of course, you allow it to absorb too much of your time. The vibration won't make you nervous, but, on the other hand, you will find that the exercise, taken properly, will prove one of the best nerve tonics imaginable. **E. M. B.** (LEOMINSTER).—I am always glad to give a girl information, but you ought to keep the rules, and give me your name, instead of your bare initials. I do not publish names, but I expect to have them as a matter of courtesy, and, if not furnished with them, do not feel under obligation to reply. You could have your bicycle re-enamelled at all sorts of prices, from about half a sovereign upwards, but if you want it done in green and gold it will cost almost double that. Nickelling is not very costly, unless there is an excess of bright parts. I have before me a quotation from a well-known firm for re-enamelling and re-nickelling my own mount, the figure of which is £1 6s. Yours is a splendid make, and you had better inquire from Singer's whether they will give your local repairer a new transfer. If not, let Singer's carry out the renewal; they will probably be quite as reasonable, only that you will have the carriage to pay both ways. You can get a pair of decent handle-bars for five or six shillings. As for tyres, if the machine has still plenty of life in it, get Dunlops, or Clinchers, or Palmers. If not, and you think it prudent to try a cheap tyre, you will find the Radax a good investment. **H. E. B.** (KENLEY).—Yes, I do think two brakes essential to every free-wheel machine. One of the cheapest and best is the compensating brake described in the November number. Write to Messrs. Morgan Bros., Ltd., Floodgate Street, Birmingham. Buy Bartholomew's maps, of a scale not smaller than four miles to the inch. The 1in. ordnance maps afford an excellent means of indulging in more detailed study. Perhaps Lucas's "Acetylator" is as good a one as you could try. The new illuminant has the advantage of cleanliness, but is not always trustworthy.

H. P.



"WELL WHATEVER THEM GEE-GEES DO, *I'M* NOT GOING TO SHY AT A MOTOR.'

SOMETHING ABOUT SHETLAND.

By F. E. Norris. Snap-shots by the Author.

The average person knows very little about Shetland. Few people ever think of visiting such an out-of-the-way "holiday" resort. In fact, some are of opinion that the place is inhabited by a semi-civilised race of pony-breeding, shawl-making natives, separated from the rest of Great Britain by a miniature Atlantic. On the other hand, there are people who, from continual observing of misleading maps, believe Shetland to be a tag-end of Orkney, the idea arising from the fact that the islands are usually put in one corner of the map, on a reduced scale. Let me put everybody right.

AT THE PONY SHOW.

A sea passage from Aberdeen of sixteen hours (220 miles) direct, or twenty hours *viâ* Kirkwall, lands the traveller safe, though seedy, perhaps, at Lerwick (pronounced Lare-wick). The town, consisting of close on five thousand inhabitants, lies on the east side of the island called Mainland, and has a commodious harbour formed by the strait separating Mainland from the adjacent island of Bressay (see map). Built of the grey stone with which the islands abound, Lerwick has a neat though somewhat joyless appearance, rising out of the very waters of the sound.

It is an agreeable surprise to the traveller, as he walks along the winding, unevenly paved Commercial Street, on the way to his hotel, that, instead of being thrown among mere ignorant sea-folk, he has hit upon one of the most enlightened spots in Great Britain north of Aberdeen. As he looks into the shops he descries such well-known names as Sunlight Soap (used for washing the shawls), Stephens' Ink, and so on; in fact, everything from Hinde's Hair Curlers to Cadbury's Chocolate can be bought at the same price as in the more frequented parts of our land. The Town Hall is a very fine edifice, that will compare well with other halls of its kind. In the tower is a turret clock chiming on five bells, made in Belgium; this was erected at her late Majesty's first jubilee.

Other notable buildings are the Anderson Institute, for widows and orphans of fishermen; the public reading-room; and Fort Charlotte, so called in honour of the Consort of King George III. There are places of worship belonging to nine different sects.

And now a word about the islands. The group, situated some fifty miles N.E. of Orkney, is about seventy miles long by forty-five miles broad, not reckoning Fair Isle, thirty miles S.S.W. of Sumburgh Head, or Foula, twenty-seven miles W. of the town of Scalloway. It consists of about thirty inhabited islands, of which the largest are: Mainland, Yell, Unst, Fetlar, Bressay, Whalsey, and Papa Stour. There is besides, of course, a large number of uninhabited islets.

SHOWING THE GOOD POINTS OF THE PONIES.

Trees are conspicuous

by their absence, except when grown behind walls, and so protected from the violent gales which frequently rage over the islands. Indeed, some sycamore trees at Scalloway, thus sheltered, though quite one hundred years old, are only 20ft. high, because the wall would not protect them above that height. The land is chiefly covered with peat, used by the Shetlanders as fuel.

On the preceding page is a photograph showing some of the famous breed of ponies. These sturdy little sure-footed animals stand on an average 3ft. to 3ft. 6ins. Their coats are usually brown, although black and piebald are sometimes met with.

The shawls, by making which the women while away some of the dreary hours of mid-winter, are too well known and appreciated to need discussion. I say "dreary" advisedly, because at mid-winter the sun rises at 10 a.m. and sets at 2.30 p.m. But in summer it is the other way round, darkness being almost unknown during May, June, and July. It is a great pity that, in getting shawls made, some of the shops employ the "truck system," and it is earnestly to be hoped that this will not be permitted to continue.

The staple industry of the men is herring fishing, the products of which go as far as Russia. The total catch of the Lerwick boats for the 1900 season realised £7,000 sterling.

Mountains there are none, the highest "hill" being about fourteen hundred feet high.

As to the character of the inhabitants, it consists in a mixture of honesty, simplicity, and goodwill that would be hard to equal. And, therefore, in conclusion, I advise anyone who is casting about for an unfrequented summer retreat to give all due consideration to this place of quiet, "far from the madding crowd" of tourists; for I am sure that if he once braves the so-called "terrors" of the sea, and plants his foot upon Shetland soil, he will be more than repaid for the tossing of the voyage by the pleasant time that he will spend in the islands.

A POINT OF COAST, PETLAR, SHETLAND.

F. E. NORRIS.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE (New Version).

TOBOGGANNING HARE: "You see I'm not going to be left behind *this* time, Mr. Tortoise!"

ON BUYING APPARATUS.

By the time this reaches our readers they will be making preparations for their summer work, and a few hints on the choice of apparatus will be acceptable. Although there are numbers of cheap cameras and sets of apparatus on the market, by means of which very good work may be done during the bright days of summer, it is always advisable to buy the very best apparatus you can afford. Good apparatus costs no more to use than inferior, and is useful under a wider range of circumstances, and should you have to sell it, will always fetch a better price, in proportion, than a cheaper kind.

The price of a really good lens for quarter-plate pictures is £2 10s., while the best will cost at least five guineas, so that to get a complete set will cost about double that sum.

The first point to be decided is whether you will use plates or films. Plates are far cheaper, and are more generally useful, but they have the disadvantage of being both heavy and easily broken. Films have the great advantages of being light and "rollable"; but they are not so reliable, and will not keep in good condition so long as plates, and you are very limited in choice as to makers. "Kodak" cameras are extremely good value for money, and are very convenient and light for touring, and some of them are made to take plates as well as films.

If more serious work is intended with an ordinary stand camera, it is better, if you can afford it, to purchase a good lens and economise in the camera if necessary. Care, however, should be taken to see that the plates in the dark slide and the focussing screen occupy the same plane when in position in the camera, or, in technical language, are "in register."

If a shutter is purchased, it is advisable that it should be capable of working at various speeds, and have some means of indicating, at least approximately, the exposure given. The tripod stand should be chosen for its rigidity when set up.

Hand cameras for plates may be divided into two classes, viz., those in which dark slides are used and those which contain the plates in a magazine. The advantage of the magazine is that the plates are always ready in position, and can generally be changed much more rapidly than by means of slides. In some cameras the focus is fixed for one point, and these are only useful for subjects beyond the ten yards, unless supplementary lenses are supplied for fixing on the front for near objects. A focussing camera with a scale may, however, be used for objects nearer than the thirty feet by racking out according to the scale. A good plan when using a camera of this kind for near objects is to pace out the distance of the object from the camera.

Weight in a camera is an advantage in use, if you do not mind carrying it.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. F. Smith (Newark).—(1) See last month. (2) The best developer to use is generally the pyro-soda one recommended by the maker of the plates you use. (3) Ilford P.O.P., Solio, Paget P.O.P., and Imperial P.O.P. are all good. (4) Thin negatives are improved by intensifying them. (5) We cannot say whether the camera you mention is the best at the price. The "Cycle Poco," sold by Griffin & Sons, Ltd., is a similar one. You should consult a good dealer who will tell you the best he can supply for the amount you are prepared to spend. **M. E. H.** (Canterbury).—There is no appliance such as you name for fixed focus cameras. A telephoto lens can only be used on a focussing camera, and is rather expensive. It would also increase the exposure necessary. **Amateur** (Hants).—Pleased to see that you have improved your negative as we advised. Sorry we cannot use the photograph, but should be pleased to see any others. **W. B. Huntly** (Edinburgh).—The reason of your trouble is that the part of the plate exposed to the atmosphere absorbed oxygen, and the developer remaining in it became oxidised, and so caused the yellow stain. I am afraid it is impossible to remove this, but you might by artificially staining the other half get a better print; or you might obtain the same result by shading the negative in printing, or by getting someone to retouch it for you. You will be careful in future to avoid a like mishap by seeing that your plates are thoroughly covered with the fixing solution.

The Photographic Editor.

"CAPTAIN" CLUB

CONTRIBUTIONS.

ONE Year's Subscription to THE CAPTAIN is divided between ALBERT ALBROW ("Sheffield Football") and "GEO." ("Target Practice at Sea"). Will "Geo." kindly send full name and address?

Are the Americans Beating Us?

THE time has now come for the English commercial nation to show its mettle. The Americans seem to beat us in athletics and all sports, and are now trying to take our command of the commercial world away from us. Their journals nowadays represent John Bull as a thin man, and in one paper there is a cartoon in which Uncle Sam is saying to him: "You can keep your little stall outside my shop, John, if you behave yourself." This may be "consid'rable fine" for the Americans, but it does not suit us. Another paper has Uncle Sam reading a book of games, and saying: "I wonder if I can find some easy game to play him. I *should* like to see him win something," while a third represents Uncle Sam playing a game of cards with John Bull. By Uncle Sam's side is the America Cup, the horse that won the Derby, and one or two other articles of that kind. He is offering to play John Bull for his "darned little island."

AN ARCH OF APPLES.

This arch, entirely composed of apples, was built on the way to Government House, Tasmania, during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York. The apples had to be soaked in kerosene, as the police found they could not keep the boys from eating them.

(Sent by C. T. Butler.)

The American Steel Trust Company has yielded 12 per cent. to shareholders, and is no longer in need of money. The syndicate of Americans which has challenged the English for the hand of Lady Nicotine has been met by a combine of British tobacco merchants, amongst whom figure such names as W. D. & H. O. Wills, Player, etc. A New York periodical shows Uncle Sam putting up his hand to stop the four Powers from touching John Bull. Underneath are written these words: "The time is coming when the Powers will combine to smash Great Britain. Then America will step in and say 'Don't!'" But let's hope matters won't come to this juncture.

J. GARRATT.

[I think my contributor is alarming himself unnecessarily. The Americans won the Derby with an English horse that was leased from an English racing stable, where it was bred and trained. The Americans occasionally get a pull over us in some smart financial deal, but they can't find a 'Varsity man to beat Workman in the one-mile or three-mile races, nor can they find a crew to beat Leander at Henley. They haven't a ghost of a chance against us at cricket or football. All the same, they are fine sportsmen and love a fair tussle. Uncle Sam is a marvel of nervous energy and cuteness, but in doggedness and endurance John Bull is at the head of all nations.—O. F.]

C. B. Fry.

(As seen by Southamptonians.)

WE of Southampton admire C. B. Fry perhaps more as a footballer than anything, for we have numerous opportunities of seeing his splendid play. When the Southampton team comes on the field before the start of the game, you can hear all round you "Where's Fry?" The answer generally is, "There—that chap with the stripe round his

stockings," as "C. B." always turns out for the "Saints" in his Corinthian striped stockings. Of course, the question is generally asked by the adherents of the visiting team, as Mr. Fry is well known to Southamptonians.

The game starts, and soon down swoop the visiting forwards with a rush. They fly past, the outside right is about to shoot, when suddenly "C. B.," with one of his beautiful kicks, clears the ball to mid-field, and we breathe again—not that we were very afraid, however, for we have the utmost faith in "C. B." and his partner, Molyneux.

"C. B. F."
(As seen by Southamptonians.)

Time after time, when a goal has seemed inevitable, I have seen Mr. Fry clear the ball and keep our citadel from falling. "C. B." is a grand football player, keen and alert; his judgment never seems to err; he is swift of foot, a good hard kicker, and never indulges in rough play, however badly he may be fouled. We always see him as cool as a cucumber—as an instance: On one occasion, with the two opposing forwards on him, he deliberately steadied the ball with his foot before kicking. Such feats as these always evoke delighted yells from the crowd. "C. B." seems to stand out from the other players; his well-knit figure, and (may I say?) handsome face, catch the eye at once, and all the "Lady Saints," I am sure, fall in love with him, as their gentlemen friends can testify. I hope to see him playing for Southampton in the English Cup ties, and helping them to gain the blue riband of the football field. That this may be the case is the sincere wish of thousands of Southamptonians, and also of his ardent admirer,

"No. 6."

Winter, the Fraud! *

I HAVE been gloating for the last month over those unfortunates who have entered the lists on winter's behalf in the Winter *v.* Summer Competition. They will have submitted essays teeming with the praises and full of the delights of skating, ski-ing, tobogganning, and other sports associated with ice; and in a country like Canada or Russia these praises are justified. But can anyone living in England conscientiously believe, as these good folk will try to prove in their essays, that the best time of the year is winter?

Look at the samples of winter we have had during the past half-dozen years, and say where are the skating over vast sheets of ice, the swift rush down a toboggan slope, or the glorious games of "bandy"? Old Fag, I declare most solemnly to you that, for the last four years at least, as winter, or the time when winter should be, approached, hopes of learning "to skim o'er the vast plain of ice, the keen air rushing by, with motions graceful, swift, and easy as a bird's", (I suppose some competitors have written like this) have filled my breast.

Alas! how often have these hopes been disappointed! We have had some snow, some ice; but we have not had "winter" as I used to think of it.

Our winters are frauds. To have winter we want the ground, the trees, the houses, in fact, everything out of doors covered with a thick, white mantle of snow, and every sheet of water, with the ground, frozen hard. Under such conditions you may wax eloquent over winter's joys, but not when we have such frauds foisted upon us as at present. These frauds, to keep up their semblance of winter, give us a little snow—a very little—and frost in varying quantities. But the bulk of the present-day winter is wet—a nasty, chilly, penetrating wet—fog, cold, and mud. These, in various combinations, constitute our up-to-date wintry weather.

CHANGING GUARD AT ONE OF THE APPROACHES TO WINDSOR CASTLE.
The Royal Party always drives through these gates from the railway station when coming to the Castle.
(Photograph by E. F. Roberts.)

*. This article was written in January.

Old Fag, be not utterly cast down; we have compensations for these inconveniences. One we find in Christmas, that blessed period when you *can't* feel irritated. Another compensation is found of an evening. When the blinds are drawn, and the lamps lit, and the fire burns red, one can read, or gossip, or play quiet games, and be cosy and warm, and feel that life is very good, until one remembers one has to go out, and then—ugh!

But the great compensation is summer. Lay down your work, and let your mind wander, Old Fag. Imagine to yourself what summer means. You are stretched full length on the grass, and you bask in the heat of the sun. You watch the surrounding scenery, and see the lazy, contented cattle, and the merry, happy birds; above your head the flowers wave, and all around is the drowsy hum of the insects. This is peace, Old Fag—this is enjoyment. Let your thoughts wander farther, and think of cricket and bathing; of boating and pleasant picnics on the river; of trips at sea and lovely excursions through the forest; and, Old Fag, you shall agree with me that winter is a fraud, and that summer is the season for pure, unalloyed enjoyment.

G. R. BEVERLEY.

[Yes, that's all very well, but how about THE CAPTAIN? I can't edit THE CAPTAIN while I am stretched full length on the grass basking in the heat of the sun, but I can edit THE CAPTAIN basking in the heat of a nice warm fire. Besides, Mr. Beverley, think what frauds some of our summers are. There have been such things as snowstorms in June!—O. F.]

CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY "TO BIRMINGHAM" WITHOUT CROSSING OVER A SINGLE LINE?

(By G. Smithson.)

Winners of "Captain" Comps.

April to September, 1901 (Vol. V.).

England	132
Scotland	25
Wales	7
Channel Isles	5
Ireland...	4
Grand total	173

H. L. DOMRÉE, C.C.

Sheffield Football.

THERE seem greater possibilities for football in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham than in Sheffield, but none of these has done so well in football as Sheffield. No other place in England can boast a record equal to the Tykes' Sunderland can show a string of championships, Preston two wreaths of laurels, Everton and Liverpool one each, and Aston Villa a hatful. Sheffield supports two clubs, both good enough to win the highest honours. No other town can make this boast. This is where Sheffield has the pull. The United and Wednesday have both won the cup, and the United have had the league leadership as well. If you take West Bromwich, Small Heath, and Aston Villa, you have a collection of clubs unequalled elsewhere in England in such an area; but to clearly establish the pre-eminence of Sheffield, it has to be remembered that its two teams are actually within the city boundaries, while the Villa is the only real representative of Birmingham. The Wednesday were established in 1866, and are one of the oldest clubs in the league. It was not, however, until the season 1892-3 that they entered the league. The United joined in the following season. Since then the United have been champions once and runners up twice. The Wednesday have never done anything of note in the league, and in 1898-9 they finished up bottom. The following season they had to fight in the second division; but they came out on top, and were again admitted to the first league. The Wednesday were the first to do anything remarkable. This was in 1890, when they appeared in the English Cup final against Blackburn Rovers. They were, however, badly beaten by six goals to one. Four years later they again appeared in the final, and this time proved successful. Since then they have gone down, while the United have come on. The season 1898-9 saw the United in the final, and, with a very powerful team, defeat Derby County by four goals to one. Two seasons later they

again fought their way into the final, and were drawn against Tottenham Hotspurs. This was played before the largest crowd that ever attended a football match, and ended in a draw. In the re-play, the United were beaten. In the matter of internationals, Needham, the United's captain, has been capped fifteen times; Crawshaw and Spikesly, of the Wednesday, have each gained seven caps. Sheffield is a truly remarkable town for football.

ALBERT ALBROW.

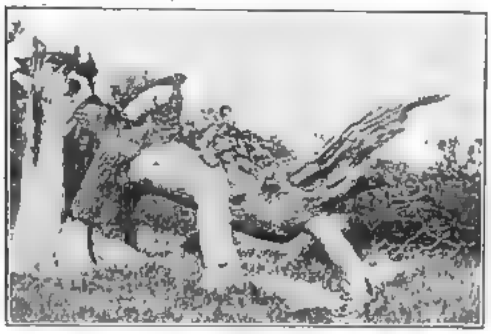
A SPRINT ALONG TOUCH
Being a recollection of C. B. F.'s "Rugger" game, by "Rip."

Target Practice at Sea.

THE salt, invigorating breeze blowing dead off shore had already caused a nasty sea to get up, making the cruiser *Gibraltar*, on which we stood, dip her "ram-nose" well into the green waves. We were out this morning for the purpose of giving the destroyers from Portsmouth a bit of target practice, and our experience was not only novel, but exceedingly exciting.

The handy man had constructed a large square canvas target, with a strong framework of wood, which we towed some few cable lengths astern. The navigating officers up on the bridge and in the white-painted chart-house had already directed their glasses upon some half-dozen small clouds of smoke far astern. These black clouds, examined carefully through a strong pair of binoculars, revealed six snaky torpedo-boat destroyers coming up very rapidly.

The great triple-expansion engines of the *Gibraltar* were only exerting half speed; the engineers were waiting for the clang of the electric signal from the officer on the bridge. The stokers, away down in the heated stoke-holes, were continuously feeding the ravenous mouths of the furnaces, and the Jacks on the decks, spick and span from crown to toe, were at their numerous duties, or crowding in little batches "to watch the fun." And now for the fun!



A CURIOUS TREE.
This curious freak of Nature, which has all the appearance of a fearsome animal, is merely an oak tree which was struck by lightning in a field near Wembley Park.
(Photograph by G. W. Watson.)

A string of flags crawls up to the yard-arm, and stiffens as it catches the wind. The dark clouds become black boats, lying low in the sea with a high rounded fo'c'sle (to break the waves that dash over the bow), upon each of which is mounted the 12-pounder quick-firing gun, with a little band of men surrounding it. The *Gibraltar* puts on speed, and in a few moments the engines are exerting nearly the full force of 10,000 horse-power.

Bang! You swing round sharp, and see as you turn a flash of foam jump up from the sea, some yards beyond the target. The first boat is well on our track, and the first shot has just been fired. Her three stumpy funnels are emitting volumes of black smoke; the vessel is at full speed, and rolls badly, making the gun platform very unsteady. Again you notice, through your glasses, the man crouching against the large shoulder piece, padded with rubber and fitted to the breech end of the gun, waiting for the favourable moment. Then a puff of smoke, the sharp bang of the cordite powder, a rip of canvas, and a huge rent appears in the square target.

The officer beside me, gorgeous in gold braid, yet business-like withal, mutters "Good shot, sir!" and again glues the glasses to his eyes. Up she comes, this little boxed-up mass of terrible power, racing past like an express, her crew covered in oilskins, their heads inside the hooded caps peculiar to the torpedo boatman, her deck all wet with the seas, and her engines exerting a force of 6,000-horse. Following her come the others, firing rapidly as they pass, with varying success, until the once sturdy target is a mass of jumbled beams and wreckage, bearing strong testimony to the aim of the men behind the guns. Taking into consideration the roll of the boat and the pitch of the target, we can proudly look round at the "stiff," clean-shaven.

and alert Jack tars, and murmur, "You can be relied upon."

As it is with these smaller vessels, so it is with their larger prototypes, and the high standard of efficiency reached by the navy in target firing during the last year or so has been aided, to a great extent, and grandly led by Captain Percy Scott, of H.M.S. *Terrible*.

GEO.

CRITICISMS.

F. C. Muller (BERLIN).—Thanks for photograph; have added it to my gallery. I experienced some difficulty in deciphering your contribution, which should have been written on larger paper. Sorry can't use it. **J. Garratt.**—Send me something about Egypt of a more chatty and anecdotal description. Write a short essay conveying your information in a pleasant and picturesque fashion. **J. M. B.** (Co. DUBLIN). — Contributions must be written properly, and not put into the middle of letters. Copy them out neatly and address to C.C.C. pages. Write only on one side of the paper. I have clubbed you. Is your signature "J. M. Blair," or "Blair J. M."?

Contributions have also been received from: J. S. Cox, James Harrison, O. L. Beater, "Nobody Much," Stanley King, Eustace Jones, A. C. Cockrell, Gildart Walker, F. S. B., Thomas Pittaway, Fred Skinner, B. A. Bigga, T. S. Plowman, Sholto Marcon, Hamilton Dunn, F.R.O.G., Sidney Wheater, Beetle, H. Proudfoot, R. F. Megginson, S. Gresty, M. J. G., R. C. Tharp, N. Neill, W. H. Thomson, "Chestnut, Esq.," J. W. Anderson, W. B. Lantour, H. Appleby, J. B. Edgar, Eljaysee, J. W. Lewis, Xaja, L. J. Hodson, Wuggins Major, F. W. R., W. J. C., Watsonian, Colin Arrol, "Noyl," W. Paterson, and others whose names will appear next month.

(A number of criticisms and accepted articles are held over.)

"CAPTAIN" COMPETITIONS FOR MARCH.

NOTICE. At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:—

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——,
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

GIRLS may compete.

You may enter for as many competitions as you like; each "comp." must be sent in a separate envelope, or, when possible, on a post-card.

In every case the Editor's decision is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Address envelopes and post-cards as follows:—Competition No. ——, Class ——, "THE CAPTAIN," 12, Burleigh Street, Strand, London.

All competitions should reach us by March 14th.

The Results will be published in May.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Only write on one side of each sheet of paper. Only one competition must be put into an envelope. Anybody disregarding these rules, or failing to address envelopes properly, *will be disqualified*.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 25 comp., so long as he has not actually turned 26. The same rule applies to all the other age limits.

No. 1.—**"Hidden Books"** (SECOND SERIES).—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to describe the title of a well-known book. Write the title of each book under each picture, fill in your name and address, tear the page out, and post to us. There will be three prizes, viz., first, £1; second, 10s.; third, 5s.; and twenty consolation prizes consisting of books by CAPTAIN authors. In the event of a number of competitors forwarding correct titles, the prizes will go to the senders of the most neatly written competitions.

No age limit.

No. 2.—**"The Twelve Greatest Living Englishwomen."**—Send your list on a post-card. Three prizes, consisting of goods to be chosen from our advertisement pages, to the value of 7s.

Class I. ... ... Age limit: Twenty-five.
Class II. ... ... Age limit: Twenty.
Class III. ... ... Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 3.— **Story of a Flower."**—This will be a good comp. for those who are interested in flowers and gardening. Imagine yourself to be a flower, and tell the story of your life. Do not exceed 400 words. Prizes: THREE HALF-GUINEA KODAKS.

Class I. ... ... Age limit: Twenty-three
Class II. ... ... Age limit: Eighteen
Class III. ... ... Age limit: Fourteen

No. 4.—**"What I think of Boys and Dogs."**—Send a letter supposed to be written by one cat to another cat, giving its views on boys and dogs. The cat should not write more than 400 words. Three prizes of 7s.

Class I. ... ... Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. ... ... Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. ... ... Age limit: Twelve.

No. 5.—**"Mixed Letters."**—Send a post-card containing the twelve words represented by these letters. They are all well-known English words. If you can't make them all out, send as many as you can. TNAHPELE, RYSAGNIUAN, LANAEVHOA, IIEEMMYDALT, INDCOSENUIT, CAFTIFR, NEPCOPPERR, ITNOLAYTINA, RTAHOU, TABOS, GIPUPNNO, ZIPER. Prizes: THREE HALF-GUINEA PING-PONG SETS.

Class I. ... ... Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. ... ... Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. ... ... Age limit: Twelve.

No. 6.—**"The Old Fag playing Ping-Pong."**—A SET OF DRAWING MATERIALS, value 7s. 6d., will be awarded for the best black-and-white sketch of the O. F. playing Ping-Pong.

One age limit: Twenty-one.

12, BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

Every April and September we make new friends in serial stories, and the end of each volume forces us to bid them farewell and prepare to welcome others. Messrs. Blake and Hodgson's well-salted mariners disappear from view this month, and we shall no longer be entertained by Chief Engineer McPherson, who, when he was a wee bit bairnie up at Dhoontrochty, used to repeat so frequently a little poem called "I Love Cauld Water." The authors are going to make a fine, big book of "In Deep Water"—which has necessarily had to be curtailed for publication in THE CAPTAIN—and then, helped by Mr. Hawley's vigorous pictures, their story will, I am sure, achieve much popularity. You can see with half an eye that these men know what they are talking about. Some day, I hope, they will write us a series of complete stories, dealing with life at sea on ships of the *Creole* type.

IN VOL. VII.

THE "JALASCO" BRIG:
A Story of the South Seas.
By LOUIS BECKE.

J. O. JONES,
And How He Earned His Living.
By R. S. WARREN BELL.

TALES OF ELIZA'S.
By FRED SWAINSON.

TOLD ON THE JUNIOR SIDE.
By H. BURROWS.

ARTICLES on ATHLETICS.
By C. B. FRY, Athletic Editor.

"A Cavalier Maid."—Those who have followed the fortunes of venturesome Mademoiselle Etienne Glanvil, in this pretty and moving story of a romantic era, will be interested to hear—though some may already have guessed it—that its author, Clifford Mills, is a lady. Mrs. E. Mills Clifford, to give our contributor her real name, is the wife of an English officer, who, like many another brave soldier, has done his share of work at the front during this long and weary war. "A Cavalier Maid" was written on the spot—near Stratton, in Devonshire—and I think all my readers will agree with me that "Clifford Mills" has caught the spirit and language of those troublous times very happily. The closing chapters could hardly be bettered. There is a world of pathos in the allusions to the hunted, shabby Cavaliers who, in spite of all, still defied the King's enemies and remained steadfastly loyal to the Cause. Very touching is the love-parting between Etienne and Sir Brian—she in her new finery, smiled upon by the world; he, ragged and desperate, with no fortune save his sword, yet stout-hearted and hopeful for the future, and, through all, a most perfect gentleman.

Perhaps the most dramatic incident in the story was poor Etienne's confession before the assembled Cavaliers in the tavern at Stratton. One can imagine the girl, worn out by her rough-and-tumble journey—not to mention the bullet wound in her wrist—shrinking before the

imperious questions of the great Latour. She had said that she was Godfrey Glanvil's son, and Latour had thundered back that Godfrey Glanvil had *no* son—no children, indeed, save one daughter. Who, then, was this young Cavalier? Poor maid! One can picture the astonishment—nay, the embarrassment—of the assembled Cavaliers, when they heard the piteous reply: "Alas, sir! I am that unhappy lady, whose loyalty, perchance, hath out-stepped conventionality!" "Clifford Mills" has told the story of her Cavalier Maid with that sympathy which only a woman could impart to such a narrative.

STACEY BLAKE.

A word is due to Mr. E. F. Skinner, the artist who has depicted so ably the divers plights in which this bold maid found herself. Mr. Skinner was genuinely sorry when he had completed his last set of pictures. "I was never more in touch with my subject," he said, "than I have been with this 'Cavalier Maid.'"

Being off with the old, let us now be on with the new. You will have already seen, on the first page of this department, a table of principal features in Vol. VII. You will, I am certain, be pleased to hear the further adventures of J. O. Jones, the Greyhouse boy, who broke the Old Door down and saved a very large number of school-fellows from suffocation. "The Story of J. O. Jones and the Great Door," said the *Guardian*, in a review of "Tales of Greyhouse," "is specially to be commended; we should like to know something of 'J. O.'s' career in later life." The author of the "Tales," curiously enough, had previously decided to make "J. O." the central figure of his next story. Don't imagine that Jones will be performing feats of strength all through the tale. Opportunities occur, you may be sure, when he is forced to display his marvellous muscular power, but he won't play the "strong man" except when it is necessary. It is a story, this, *of how he earned his living*. It is a school story, but not a "Greyhouse Tale," being concerned with a school of quite a different stamp—a private school, in fact. Along with "J. O. Jones," Mr. Fred Swainson will be telling you "Tales of 'Eliza's'"—as St. Elizabeth's, the great public school, was disrespectfully termed by its *alumni*. Mr. Burrows will also continue his lively series, "Told on the Junior Side." Thus, in our new volume, several aspects of school life will be dealt with—what more want you?

W. E. HODGSON.

"The 'Jalasco' Brig."—I need not tell you who Mr. Louis Becke is. With the exception, possibly, of the late Robert Louis Stevenson, no man has written in a more interesting way of the South Seas, of South Sea Islanders, or of the strange piratical doings that have caused that part of the watery globe to have a peculiar and engrossing interest for those who tell of travel and adventure. Mr. Becke's tale concerns a most curious instance of marine highway robbery, in which one man pitted himself against a whole ship's company. There are many little touches in the story which show that the author of "By Reef and Palm," "Rodman the Boat-steerer," and "Tom Wallis," is thoroughly at home in these latitudes. The reason is that Mr. Becke was for years a trader in these Southern Seas, and knows them as we of THE CAPTAIN know Burleigh Street. I promise you a big spell of enjoyment aboard "The *Jalasco* Brig."

"George Washington and the Hatchet."—A number of correspondents

have written to me drawing my attention to the fact that the winning CAPTAIN Club Competition in our January number bears a very close resemblance to a piece called "The Simple Story of G. Washington," by an anonymous author, which is to be found on pages 101-105 of Mark Twain's "Library of Humour." I have carefully compared the two, and my opinion coincides with that of my correspondents. In reply to a communication from me, Mr. Alex. H. Clapperton, winner of the prize in question, admits that he founded his story on an article "put together in a style similar to the one I submitted to you." Mr. Clapperton declares, however, that he had no intention of "cribbing." "If I have erred, I have erred unconsciously," he adds, "and beg to sincerely apologise." In the course of my comparison it occurred to me that Mr. Clapperton could not have had the American story before him when he wrote his paper, and I see no reason why I should not accept his explanation that it was his sincere intention to write an original article based upon an old idea. "I am perfectly willing," he says, "to forego the prize awarded." Under the circumstances, therefore, I shall accept his offer, and give the January CAPTAIN Club Contributions prize to Mr. HARRY MULLETT, 208, Abbey Road, Alexandra Villas, Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs., for his article entitled "How to Make a Flagpole" (page 369). In conclusion, I must point out to all young writers that founding articles on old ideas is a dangerous experiment, especially when the similarity between the old and the new is made so apparent.

School Magazines received (a selection will be reviewed next month): *Aberdeen Grammar School Magazine, Academy Magazine (Greenock), Allan Glen's Monthly, Alperton Hall Magazine (2), Arvonian, Barrian, Bede Magazine (2), Blackpool High School Magazine, Boltonian, Borlasian, Boys' and Girls' Colonial Magazine (5), Bramptonian, Brighton College Magazine, Camaraderie, Canadian Boy, Carthusian, Clactonian, Clavinian (2), Colchester High School Magazine, Colfeian, Cottonian, Day School Gazette, Durban High School Magazine, Elizabethan, Epsomian, Esmeduna (2), Framlinghamian, Fulneck School Magazine, Glasgow Academy Chronicle, Haileyburian (4), Hulmeian, Hurst Johnian (3), Ipswich School Magazine (2), Irish Blue, Johnian, Kendalian, Lorettonian (2), Malvernian (3), "Mercury" Magazine (3), Mercers' School Magazine, Mill Hill Magazine, Morrisonian, North Point Annual (Darjeeling), Olavian, Pilgrim, Portcullis (2), Portmuthian, Quarterly Review (Liverpool), Quernmorian, Review (2), Rolandseck School Magazine, St. Andrew's College Magazine, St. Michael's Chronicle, St. Thomas's College Magazine (3), St. Winifred's Magazine, Salopian (2), Sandwich School Magazine (2), Sedberghian (2), Sotoniensis, Spencerian, Stanley House School Magazine (3), Tamensian, Tasmanian School Journal, Tonbridgian, Truro College Magazine, Wasp, West Kentian, Whitchurchian, Wulfrunian, Xaverian Quarterly.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. N. MoW.—You tell your German companions, when they jeer at you, that this Boer War is about the toughest war ever undertaken by anybody. Any other country but Great Britain would have been licked out of the field long ago by the enormous difficulties of climate, country, etc., which we have had to contend with. It has been, in its way, a sort of civil war, because a great many of the Boers are practically British, and know our language, and have used this knowledge in order to play the traitor by calling out such things as "Don't shoot—we are English!" and then firing on their more chivalrous opponents when the latter were at a disadvantage. Of course, the average Boer has been humbugged all along by his leaders. As for your question about Great Britain going down, you may tell your companions that Great Britain was never in such a splendidly secure and strong position as she is in now. We absolutely rule the seas with our enormous fleet, and we have practically the carrying trade of the world, which means power and money such as no other country can lay claim to. No single European power could tackle us, and the Great Powers know that well. They would have liked to have been at our throats during this war, but our ships were a wholesome check upon them. I am glad to hear that you stick up for the old country, and that you won't call yourself a "pro-Boer," or "Boer," or anything of that kind. Finally, I believe that when the war is over the Boers will live very happily under British rule. Many of them will no doubt enter our service as soldiers. They have already shown their magnificent fighting qualities, and when properly trained and taught to look steel in the face without flinching, they should become invincible.

Chinawife (GLASGOW) (1) is very angry because Mr. W. H. Williamson, in his story, "Rats," made MacFinn, the bully, talk such fearfully broad Scotch. My correspondent says that you only hear a Scotch farmer say "Na" instead of "No." Educated people in Scotland speak English, she says, as well as the English themselves. "It was therefore," she goes on, "a glaring absurdity to make a boy whose people were able to send him to a good English public school, speak the jargon attributed to him." "Chinawife" doesn't "suppose Mr. Williamson was ever in Scotland, or spoke with a Scotchman, all his life." (2) After this, "Chinawife" goes on to chat in a most interesting way about papers and magazines, and I must say that I agree with most of what she says—viz., that the average monthly magazine is filled with fearful rubbish, and that the ladies' papers mainly consist of "snobby

articles about the aristocracy, a few bad cookery recipes, a paper pattern, and a sentimental story." (3) The list of books she requires is as follows: "Tales of Greyhouse," "Love the Laggard," "Bachelorland," "The Papa Papers," and "The Cub in Love." Only the first-named can be termed a book for boys, however. (4) I really cannot discuss politics, but I heartily wish that the House of Commons could raise itself to the standard of the famous days when one might hear Gladstone, Disraeli, and Bright speak almost any night in the week. Those were times indeed!

"**A Well-wisher** to all Boys who are going to Sea" writes to say that he considers the incidents mentioned in "In Deep Water" are very much exaggerated, particularly where it is related that the captain of the vessel got intoxicated, and fought with the first mate. He adds that the food provided on such ships is not nearly so bad as it is described by the authors. If "A Well-wisher" has read his CAPTAIN regularly he ought to know that the stories and articles in this magazine are nearly all written by experts. For the benefit of other doubtful readers, Mr. W. E. Hodgson, who is responsible for the nautical incidents depicted in "In Deep Water," informs me that the fight between the captain and the mate was witnessed by himself many years ago in the Atlantic. As for the food, although the majority of our shipowners are now very liberal in this respect, the description given of the rubbish supplied to the crew of the *Creole* is by no means overdone.

Chester R. Brown (CHICAGO) is pained because we print jokes in THE CAPTAIN about Americans, and represent Americans as wild and woolly-looking. "You picture the American," exclaims Mr. Brown, "as a bloodthirsty, stony-hearted villain. Nearly all the Americans I have met in THE CAPTAIN have been of this type—Captain Howell, in your serial story, and that visitor of yours who wants to describe Chinese tortures. These men would be sent to prison or to the asylum in America." Mr. Brown then suggests that he should write us a series of articles on Chicago. I fear I have no space for a series, but perhaps Mr. Brown would like to send me a short article called "The Real American." In order not to pain Mr. Brown in the future, I shall be very careful as regards what I say about Americans. (Signed, "O. F.")

Keen Admirer has his CAPTAINS saved for him at home until the holidays, as, if they are sent to him at school, he says, everybody borrows them, and they are returned to him thumbed, dilapidated, and more or less dirty. The only solution I can suggest is that "Keen Admirer" should persuade all those other fellows to take in THE CAPTAIN. If he has it sent to him at school he is bound to lend it, as, of course, he cannot be selfish. Let him put the matter plainly to the other fellows: Why shouldn't some of *them* take in THE CAPTAIN and lend it to *him* occasionally? I think they will see the force of his argument, especially if "K. A." shows them our new features for Vol. VII.

Table Tennis.—Devotees of this extraordinarily popular pastime—oh, yes! I have played it myself and got extremely hot!—will be glad to hear of a new net, recently patented, known as the "Adjustable Tennis Net." This net is made of wire, and stands on the table, perfectly rigid, by means of three crosspieces. It is instantly adjusted, and requires no screws or clamps. The price is 3s. 6d., and it can be had from John Piggott, Cheapside, London.

S. Langlois.—Keep your eye on our columns for any developments of the club. Just at present our experts give advice to members, and the club helps us to keep together in a happy band. That's about all. We are not going to erect a club-house in which there will be a library, ball-room, etc., just yet. That must wait! I am sorry you have to pay more than 6d. for THE CAPTAIN in Valparaiso. I suppose it cannot be helped, as it is such a long sea journey.

Isobel Jones.—You can get a canary from Mr. Wilson, 36, New Oxford Street, London. If you send him a stamped envelope he will send you his prices. I hope you thoroughly understand how to look after canaries, and don't think that it begins and ends with putting them into a cage and giving them a little seed and water. Get a little book called "General Management of Canaries," price 2s. 9d. post free, from L. Upcott Gill, 170, Strand, W.C.

Rover.—To get into a bank you must obtain a nomination from a director or chief official, and pass an examination in the usual English subjects and the elements of a foreign language. Early application is advisable, as it is often years before a nomination can be secured. Clerks are usually admitted between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two.

Tog.—(1) There is a monthly magazine called *Fashion*, which treats entirely of masculine dress. I think its price is 6d., and you can get it or order it at any bookseller's. I have looked at it once or twice at my club, and have found it very readable. (2) The first-named is the editor of this magazine.

Brown Bee.—The only way you can acquire ease in writing is by constant practice. You cannot make it "flow naturally," as you call it, until you have done a good deal of writing. Read the "C.C.C." criticisms in back numbers, and you will pick up a lot of hints.

F. G. Skinner.—I think we should get into a fine muddle if we began to appoint associates of first, second, and third degrees amongst CAPTAIN Club contributors. I prefer the present system, thank you. At the same time, I appreciate the interest you take in the magazine.

R. A. Ash.—Many thanks for your kind suggestions. We do not send out specimen copies of THE CAPTAIN. It was very good of you to think of that plan for enlarging THE CAPTAIN'S sale. Stamped addressed envelopes must always be enclosed for autographs

H. Inman.—An official representative has to "buck up" THE CAPTAIN all he can, and get people to take it in, etc. If he meets a fellow who doesn't read it and should read it, he ought to jolly well persuade him to read it.

Pop.—I recommend Talbot Baines Reed's famous school stories, a list of which you can obtain from the Religious Tract Society, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.

E F. C. M.—A good book is "Hints on Wood Carving," obtainable from "Hobbies" Publishing Department, 12, Paternoster Square, E.C., 1s. 1d., post free.

C. C.—I should include Perim Island in Asia. **W. J.**—(1) Feed your rats on bread soaked in milk, oats, and any kind of nuts. (2) See Mr. Fry's answer. **W. S. B. Query.**—"Tales of Greyhouse" started in April, 1899, and appeared at intervals afterwards for two years or so; "Acton's Feud" in April, 1900. **Muladores.**—"Fancy Mice," price 1s. 2d., post free, from L. Upcott Gill, 170, Strand, W.C. **Gryps.**—Knight, Frank, & Rutley, 23A, Maddox Street, London, W. **C. Le Cornu.**—Try Boosey & Co., Musical Publishers,

Regent Street, London, W. **Grigalach.**—Clubbed. Will consider your suggestion. **"Pontus I."**—Write to Denny & Co., 147, Strand, W.C. **Sprouts.**—Oh, yes, we take jokes in the C.C.C. corner.

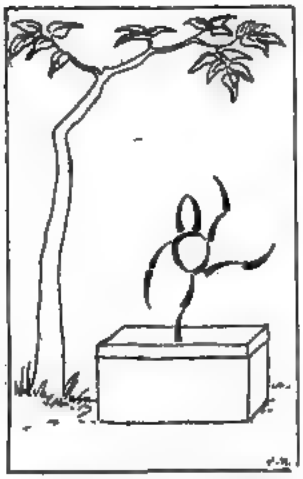
Official representatives appointed: P. Ramsay Laird (Edinburgh—and is clubbed), Arthur D. Vaughan (Weybridge), W. H. Sadler (Ross, Herefordshire), R. A. N. Briscoe (Chippenham, Wilts), H. Inman (South London).

I also have to acknowledge, with thanks, letters from: "Idea Merchant II." "George" (thanks for photograph—covers 1s. 6d. each, post free, from this office; any stationer will bind your CAPTAINS for you), F. A. Rees (clubbed), Cyril U. Whitney (thanks for your photograph and good wishes), H. Martin Robinson, S. F. Panton (clubbed), Mrs. Maisom (have clubbed your son), "One of a Litter," "Two Old Worcesters," "A. Pauline," "Cæsar," T. C. Thorpe, Mark Miller, "Autographs," "Occasional Reader" (hoping he'll become a regular one), J. W. Brisbane, W. D. Newton, H. Mills Whittle, "Suggester," G. Rawson, Frank Cundy, "Alpha," and others whose communications will be acknowledged next month.

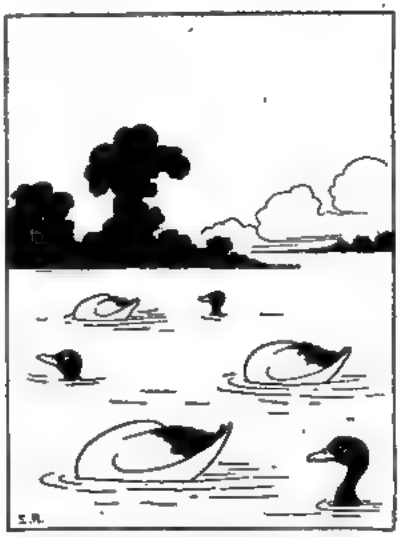
N.B.—All applications for club membership are duly attended to, but we do not acknowledge such applications in this department except under special circumstances.

(A number of answers are held over.)

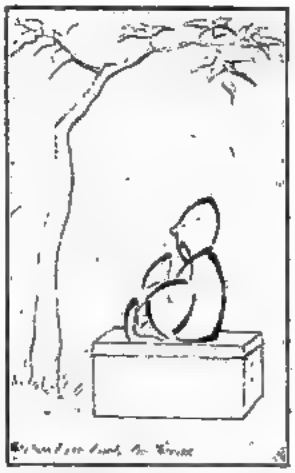
THE OLD FAG.



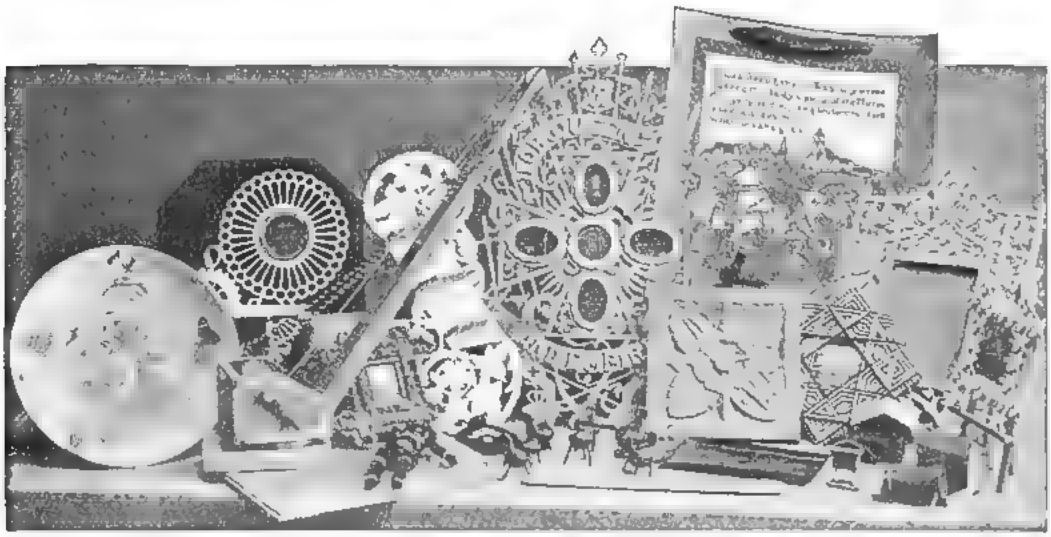
Part winner of the "Box and Tree" Comp.
By H. H.



Correct Solution of the "Three Ducks" Comp.



Part winner of the "Box and Tree" Comp.
By T. R. Davis



Some Results of the "Handiwork" Competition. These have been sent to Dr. Stephenson's Homes for Children.

Results of January Competitions.

No. I.—"My Favourite Character in Shakespeare."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-five.)

WINNER OF 7s.: C. V. THOMPSON, "Cranalagh More," Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: DORA WOLFERSTAN, Townsend House, Plymouth.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Nellie Kennedy, Daisy Campbell, M. Prosser, W. J. White, Bertrand De Fontaine, J. H. Weeks, Dorothy Owen, Marguerite Dowding, R. A. H. Goodyear.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty.)

WINNER OF 7s.: MARION WILSON, "Woodstock," Camberley, Surrey.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: V. B. HASKINS, Warmley House, Warmley, near Bristol; and J. MARTIN LUCK, "The Poplars," Horsmonden, Kent.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Maud M Lyne, E E Hyde, John W. Lewis, E. W Stiles, Winnie Campbell, John Leigh Turner, Walter Higgins, Hugh T. Mowat, Humphrey Foster, Myrtle Francis, Doris Daniels, Eva M. Morris, Cyril H. Blackburne, P. W Bennett.

CLASS III.—(Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF 7s.: WILLIAM CAMERON, 246, High Street, Perth, N.B.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: FRANCESCA M WILSON, 16, Lynnwood Avenue, Benfinck Road, Newcastle; and FRIDA PHILLIPS, "High Elms," Hitchin, Herts.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Harvey Bateman, Howard Mellor, John J. Wontner, M. Schindhelm, Willie Watkins, Nellie Bescoby, Eric H. Chapman, Maud C. Dowson, "Hawthorne," Olive Hay, Daisy Deane, A. Browning, Walter S. Leeming, Edward T Fairlee.

No. II.—"Handiwork Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-three.)

WINNER OF 10s.: GWYNEDD M. HUDSON, 57, Tisbury Road, Hove.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: W. J. WHITE, "Fairlea," Abergavenny.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Godfrey Allen, Norah Simmonds, Mary Morston, Sybil O'Neill.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Eighteen.)

WINNER OF 10s.: G. WILLIAMS, Sydenham House, Harrogate.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: J. B. O'NEILL, 371, Dumbarton Road, Glasgow; and H. A. HATTS, 81, Lever Street, Goswell Road, E.C.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. P. Cook, Oliver Lewis, William Vaughan, Muriel Wilson, Hon. Constance Foljambe, James Macallan, Charles Widlake, Ernest Campbell, L. Tucker, Sydney Farnsworth, W. G. Parkinson, David Pryde, Eleanor Hunt.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Fourteen.)

WINNER OF 10s.: WILLIAM BRADBURY, 28, Finchley Road, Kennington Park, S.E.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: H. HAWARD, Woodstock Corner, Bedford Park, Chiswick, W., and R. N. SOUTHWELL, "The Beeches," 60, Bracondale, Norwich.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Jack Stanford, Leslie Ray, Mary Douglas, Hilda M. Luck, Bertram Travers, A. Jones, Kenneth Gabbett, E. M. Taylor, Dorothy Spalding, Walter S. Leeming, Daphne Kenyon-Stowe.

No. III.—"Omitted Words."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF 7s.: DAVID LOUGHNAN, St. Thomas Road, Launceston, Cornwall.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: DORA DANIELS, Mile End Road, Eaton, Norwich; and GILBERT T. LUCAS, 8, Cromwell Square, Queen's Drive, Glasgow.

HONOURABLE MENTION: H. Foster, A. Margaret Menzies, J. H. Gellatly, H. E. Tetlow, Jennie Clasper, A. D. Vaughan, A. D. Pickard, Annie J. Anderson, F. Stafford Smith, S. H. James, Hugh T. Mowatt, Albert Bentley, F. A. Woodcock.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF 7s.: EDWARD G. F. COTTS, 34, Bath Street, Bevois Town, Southampton.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: PERCIVAL DOLLIN, Littlegrove Cottages, Cat Hill, East Barnet, Herts; KITTIE WADE, 41, Great Dover Street, Southwark, S.E.; and JOHN W. HAYE, "Lake Bank," Station Town, Wingate, Co. Durham.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Harold Smith, G. P. Harris, Dorothy E. Blackman, A. H. Buckle, William Roocroft, Sydney Diss, A. G. Brown, Elsie Scriven, W. Gavin, Bertha M. Williams, R. E Jayne, M. Langlois, Violet A. Smith, Mary Francis, James Anderson, Winifred Annett, Fred C. English, J. Norman Peck, C. Spencer, Spurgeon Parker, W. J. Jones, T. C. Thorpe, Stanley H. Webb, Frida Phillips.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF 7s.: STANLEY HOATSON, "The Manse," King Street, Leek, Staffs.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to: AMYAN PHILLIPS, "High Elms," Hitchin, Herts; and NANCY HUNTLY, 35, Newington Road, Edinburgh.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Charles de la Hulmiere, D. G. Rougnette, A. M Barnes, W. G. Elder, Edgar Peers, W Pycroft, G. A. Hatteraley-Smith, C. S. Bird, Richard Drake, Katherine H. Barrs, Eustace C. Crowther, Guy Oxanor, James C. Webb.

No. IV.—"Christmas Card Design."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-five.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: MAY BERKELEY, "Le Hocq," Victoria Road, Upper Norwood, S.E.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: THE HON ALICE FOLJAMBE, Kirkham Abbey, York.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Katherine Richardson, Hubert Holliday, W. J. White.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: GWYNEDD HUDSON, 57, Tisbury Road, Hove, Sussex.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: ARTHUR S. ATKINSON, 12, Brantfell Road, Blackburn.

HONOURABLE MENTION: D. C. Hudson, G. H. L. Barnes, W. Vaughan, Fred. Inkster, Fred. Carter, L. McDonald Gill, Alfred N. Tucker, John Brown, Dudley G. Buxton, Winifred Simmons, Madge Bradney, W. W. Humphrys.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: H. HAWARD, Woodstock Corner, Bedford Park, Chiswick, W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: SIDNEY R. E. PHILLIPS, 15, Beaumont Street, Oxford.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Roy Evans, David Pryde, Margaret P. Thompson, D. H. Neilson, Margaret Vaughan, John Gauld.

No. V.—"Ducks."

WINNER OF 7s.: STANLEY W. MILBURN, 8, Thornhill Park, Sunderland.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE has been awarded to: W. A. OLDFIELD, York City and County Bank, Doncaster.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Edmund T. Morris, S. Parry, N. A. F Knox, W J White, C. Wolferstan.

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of the "Captain," "Strand," "Sunday Strand," "Wide World," or one of the books by "Captain" authors advertised in this number. The names of the winners of the "Extra" Consolation Prizes will be announced next month.

COMMENTS ON THE JANUARY COMPETITIONS.

No. I.—This proved a most popular subject for an essay, and some good, original work was sent in. The majority of competitors chose as their "Favourite Characters" Portia, Antonio, Brutus, Imogen, Rosalind, and King Henry V., while others, venturing further away from the beaten track, chose such characters as Virgilia, Adam in *As You Like It*, and Lear's Fool.

No. II.—This competition produced some wonderful exhibitions of skill, the most ingenious entry being a miniature set of furniture composed of chestnuts, pins, and wool. Another very cleverly made article was a toy crane, which actually worked, raising from the floor to a table hats, books, etc. A thermometer in a fretwork setting; a copper-work ash tray, with a very pretty design wrought upon it; a toy house and outhouse, made with bits of wood and gum; a box ornamented with poker work; and plenty of other very cleverly fashioned articles formed quite a show when set out on a couple of tables.

No. III.—The paragraph, with the missing words supplied, will be found in the February number, page 464, near the foot of the second column. No one was fortunate enough to get all the missing words right, the chief stumbling block being the word "stony." Only three competitors thought of it, but, unfortunately, they had other words wrong.

No. IV.—Although keenly contested, great lack of originality was shown in the Christmas card competition, competitors following too much on the lines of the orthodox card published by the well known firms, or else breaking out into poster designs of the Hassall school.

No. V.—Many were the ways suggested by competitors to make the "Three Ducks" into six, the prize being awarded to the sender of the solution most nearly resembling that to be found on page 575, which is the artist's idea.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

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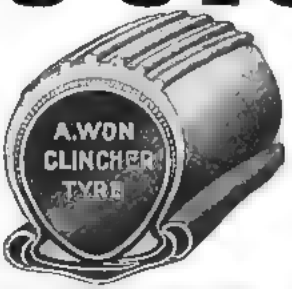

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SEE "CAPTAIN" COMPETITIONS FOR MARCH, PAGE 370.

(Tear out this page.)

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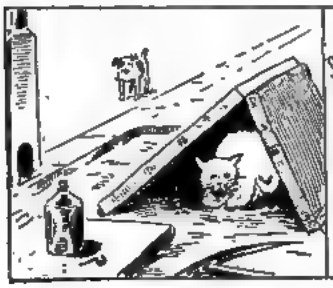
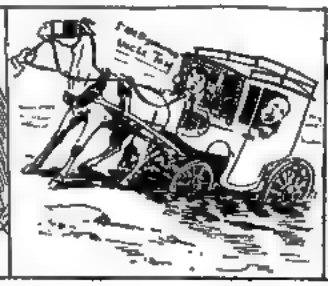
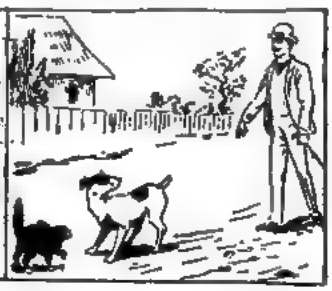
2.—..... 3.—.....







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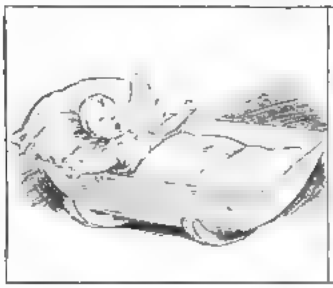

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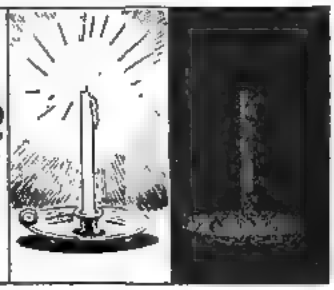

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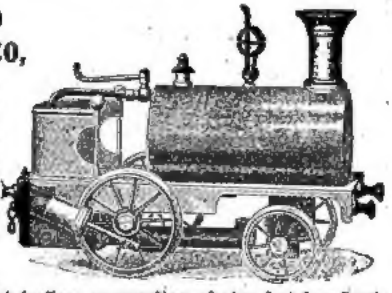

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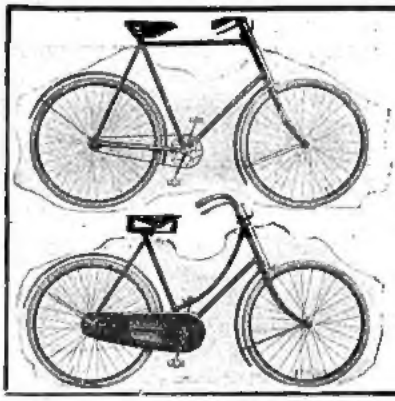

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THE EDITOR.]

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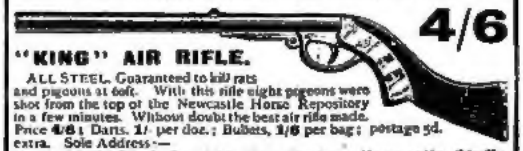

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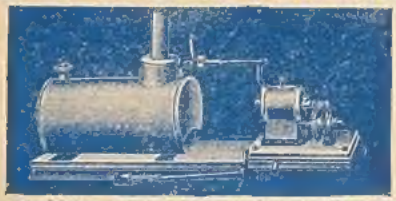

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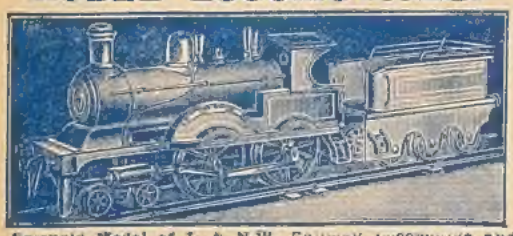

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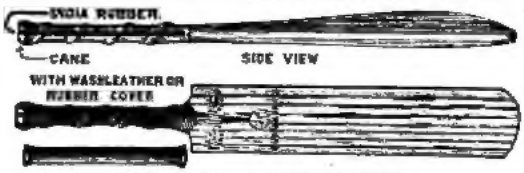

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